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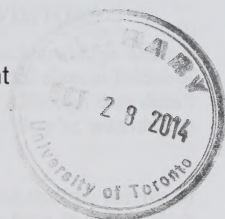
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature



## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 20 October 2014

Lundi 20 octobre 2014

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 October 2014

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 octobre 2014

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning, and welcome home. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to acknowledge teacher Yvonne Malanka-Linseman's grade 5/6 class at Prince of Wales Public School in Brockville. Although they didn't make the three-and-a-half-hour trip, they're watching at home.

Good morning, students.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm delighted that the parents of our page captain, Adam McMahon from Parkdale-High Park, are here. Wendy Hubble and Peter McMahon are here in the public members' gallery to see their son.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Today it is my great pleasure to introduce three individuals in the members' east gallery who work extremely hard every day on behalf of Ontarians and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: Bryan Bossin, Lesley Sherban and Christina Crowley.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** Today, I'd like to welcome Judy Wilcox from the county of Glengarry—next to my riding in South Glengarry—to the Legislature. Welcome.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Please help me in welcoming an old high school and university friend in the members' east gallery. Maxine Charlesworth and her husband, Derek Reimer, are visiting us from Victoria, BC.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** It's with great honour that, today, I would like to introduce two of my good, good friends: Anick Tremblay, who is our executive assistant in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans, and also Kyle Reaburn, who is going to be joining me here at Queen's Park. I would like to welcome them this morning.

**Mr. Harinder S. Takhar:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the grade 10 students of Stephen Lewis Secondary School and their teachers and volunteers. I know they are not here, but they should be here shortly.

### JOSEPH NG

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, it's with much sadness that I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that one representative from each caucus be allowed to speak for up to five minutes in memory of Mr. Joseph

Ng, a valued member of the Legislative Assembly dining room who passed away recently, and rise for a moment of silence following the speeches.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to do a tribute.

Do we agree? Agreed.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Today I would like to recognize the life of Joseph Ng. Joseph served in the legislative dining room for the last 15 years, but he does not need an introduction to my fellow members in this room. Everyone knew Joseph, admired Joseph and felt a warmth of friendship towards him.

Joseph came to Canada from Hong Kong as a teenager. Like a number of us in this chamber, Joseph lived the most Canadian experience—that of an immigrant—and he had made the best of it.

It was clear that Joseph found great pride and honour to serve in this building. This was felt in the way that he befriended each and every member who entered the dining room. Joseph had a way of making us feel, every time, that we were being greeted by a lifelong friend. He always remembered how you took your coffee and the last time he had seen you. He was just as kind in nature and courteous with everyone, whether they were a visitor, a staff member, an MPP or a minister. Joseph was a true gentleman. I am certain that great warmth and friendship is reflected in all of our memories of Joseph.

These past few days, as I spoke to some of my colleagues, the conversation more than once turned to reflecting on Joseph. The more people I spoke to, the more I realized how Joseph had impacted the experience of so many who serve at Queen's Park. Joseph always remembered everyone's name, and we just as certainly knew his.

Hundreds of people work so diligently, Mr. Speaker, to keep the institution of the Legislature running every single day. Joseph stood out among them. Of all the staff at Queen's Park who support and serve the members of the Legislative Assembly, Joseph truly shone. That is a gift of humanity, an example of the generous and kind nature of human existence. In this very busy, very hectic, very partisan institution, he served to remind us of the humanity that lies within all of us, and the importance of never forgetting someone's name and giving them a smile or a warm greeting.

This wonderful man had such an impact on our lives. We feel a sense of loss and a hole in this building, but the greatest loss is felt by his family. On behalf of the Premier, my colleagues and every member of this House, I



extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Carol; his daughters, Aeolia, Martina and Amaranta; and all of his family and friends. We thank you for sharing Joseph with us.

Joseph, we will miss you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Mr. Speaker, like everyone here in this assembly, I was shocked, astonished and surprised beyond words when I heard the news of Joseph Ng's unexpected passing earlier this summer. On behalf of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus—both current and former—I would like to extend our most sincere and heartfelt condolences to Joseph's family: to his wife, Carol; his three daughters, Aeolia, Martina and Amaranta; and also his twin granddaughters, Abigail and Rowan.

I first met Joseph and came to know him shortly after being elected here in 2007. We found that we had something in common: beer and enjoying good conversation. I was not an intimate or long-time friend of Joseph, and I know little of his earlier life, other than that he arrived here in Ontario nearly 40 years ago from Hong Kong at the age of 18.

**1040**

Although there is much of Joseph's life that I do not know, I wanted to take a few moments to share with everyone those qualities and traits that I do know. What struck me most about Joseph, since he first served that beer to me, and was immediately obvious to anyone, was his happiness. Each and every time, and without fail, when I saw Joseph, he was always happy. His eyes were always shining and gleaming. He was never without a smile and a face full of enjoyment and an upbeat greeting. Whether in the dining room or at an evening reception or meeting him in the lobby while leaving the building on his way home, you would always find the most friendly, happy greeting that was infectious, everlasting and genuine.

Joseph served me many beers over the last seven years. In our world of politics and in our habitat of partisanship, where it's theatrics that keep our world turning, Joseph was a most memorable individual, full of those most endearing and genuine qualities of honesty, friendliness and happiness. Although Joseph did not hold elected office, he embodied those qualities that we all find honourable.

Once again, on behalf of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus, we shall all dearly miss our honourable and happy friend Joseph Ng.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, on behalf of New Democrats, I also want to extend our sincere condolences to the family of Joseph. His daughters are here with us: Aeolia, Martina and Amaranta Ng. As well, we give our condolences to Joseph's wife, Carol; his father; and his grandchildren.

Joseph was a fixture in the dining room downstairs. I always think of Joseph and of Richard; they were two peas in a pod, if you will, in terms of their work in the dining room, serving the members and our guests, as

Joseph did so diligently over so many years in his employment in the dining room.

It's interesting. We knew Joseph was sick. He had come to work a number of times looking not well, looking weaker and thinner, even though he was a wiry and thin guy to begin with. We saw as his disease—a disease that touches pretty much everybody in Ontario and in Canada, that devastating disease of cancer—started to eat away at him. We saw that he was gone for a little while from the dining room as he was receiving treatments. We were thrilled to welcome him back when he came back, having gained enough strength to once again come to work. As you know, Joseph was a working guy. He was somebody who needed to work to be able to pay the bills and put a roof over his head and the heads of his family. He was a stand-up guy in that regard.

One of the things that I found interesting about Joseph was that, notwithstanding the fact that he did remember if you took coffee or tea or sugar or no sugar—he would say to me, “No carbs today again, I guess,” and I would say, “No carbs, Joseph. Whatever you can get me in the line of a salad would be great.” So he did remember things about the people that he provided such diligent service to.

One of the things that I always enjoyed about Joseph was that he was quite a conversationalist. Joseph could engage you in a discussion about politics on any level. He got what was going on. He got what was going on here. He was always careful: He was never partisan. But he certainly paid attention to what was happening here in this Legislature, what was happening in Canadian politics and what was happening in world politics, as a matter of fact. He was a very astute person and was always very engaging if you took the time to have a discussion with him about important issues that face our province, our country and our world.

The other thing about Joseph is that he had a pretty wicked sense of humour. I don't know how many people experienced that, but I can tell you that more than once I was in tears laughing at something that Joseph said. He had a very quick wit. He was quite interested in all things going on around us and was very able to turn a quick phrase or to make a very astute comment that often was quite humorous. He was a very funny, funny person.

As was mentioned, he had a sparkle in his eye. I think that's because often in his mind, he was thinking about a whole bunch of things that he just wasn't going to say out loud. But for sure, he had a great sense of humour.

He was also, at the same time, a very quiet and humble person. I think that's what led to so much of the respect that he had gained in his life from the members and their guests as he went through his work at the Legislature.

I've heard that Joseph was a singer. I never heard Joseph sing. I heard him tell jokes, I heard him tell stories, and I bantered with him on political issues. I never heard him sing. I can remember being in the dining room a couple of times later on in the afternoon having a quick meeting with someone while they were cleaning up



and tidying up the aftermath of the lunch rush, and I can remember there being jazz music on the radio. As I think of Richard over the next—or rather of Joseph; I keep thinking of Richard and Joseph. They were two peas in a pod the whole time. As I think of Joseph over the next while, when he comes to my mind, I'll be thinking of him singing some Frank Sinatra tune as he cleans up the tables in the dining room downstairs.

To all the family and friends and associates of Joseph Ng, on behalf of New Democrats, our sincerest condolences. We will miss him terribly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their heartfelt condolences and their thoughts and prayers. I offer my personal condolences to the family and to the dynamic duo of Joe and Richard, who served me root beer on an ongoing basis; they knew exactly what to do for me. I too had some marvellous conversations with Joe, and I deeply appreciate the gift of him.

I thank the members for elevating our staff. We sometimes take our staff for granted, and I know that all of us never do that here with the hard-working people of the Legislature. His loss is our loss, and I thank you all.

It is now time for question period. The leader of Her Majesty's—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, sorry. Forgive me. I forgot the rest of the unanimous consent. Could we all rise please for two minutes of silence.

*The House observed two minutes' silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I think that was a reminder that I haven't been in the chair very long, so it's a reminder of my duties.

I also forgot to say that we will provide the family with a copy of Hansard and a DVD of the tributes paid to Joseph. Thank you.

It is now time for question period. The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I just want to begin by welcoming everyone back to the Legislature. With the exception of the tribute to Joseph Ng, it feels like déjà vu all over again, Speaker—they're there, and we're here.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** All's right in the world.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I teed that up for you.

Premier, Ed Clark made it clear that his report had only the conclusions that you wanted when he stated, "You can only do it by sitting down with the Premier and saying ... 'If you're going to ask me to do something, why don't you have me do something that you actually want?'"

Premier, because you didn't allow Mr. Clark to have all of the options on the table right from the get-go, a number of people, including myself, think that what you

really wanted was an excuse—a report, that would allow you to bring in new revenue tools that will raise the cost of alcohol, beer and hydro, just to name a few, with the added threat of people losing their jobs as you squeeze these assets.

So I ask you today: Are people going to lose their jobs? How many people are going to lose their jobs? Is the price of beer going to go up? Is alcohol going to go up? Are hydro—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Premier?

1050

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my voice with the Leader of the Opposition to welcome everyone back. I know that everyone has worked very hard in their constituencies over the period of time that the Legislature wasn't sitting. Welcome back here. There is a lot of work to do, and I'm very pleased that we are all back here to do it.

As the Leader of the Opposition knows, we ran on a plan to build the province up. We ran on a plan to make investments in the people, in the infrastructure, in the businesses of this province, and that's what we're going to do. Part of that was, we said we were going to ask Ed Clark and his group, the council that included Janet Ecker and Frances Lankin, to give us some advice on assets, and that's exactly what we've done.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, to go back to the Premier, it's clear that Ed Clark's recommendations won't solve the significant financial problems that you've brought to this province: an \$11-billion deficit, which is more than all the other provinces and the federal government combined. My colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills said it right when he said that it's clear that you've learned nothing from previous debacles. You couldn't "run a hot dog stand."

Premier, will you do what we have asked—to make sure you get it right this time, because your track record with Ornge and the gas plants is abysmal and scandalous—and ask the Auditor General to review every public asset sale before you move forward, to ensure that the taxpayers are getting the best deal?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I actually believe that what we have asked Ed Clark and his council to do is a perfect example of learning from the past, because if we think about the way the member opposite's party, when they were in office, dealt with the 407, there could not be a more blatant example of a thoughtless, unplanned and absolutely bad deal for the people of Ontario. We have learned that this view and review of assets has to be done in a thoughtful way. It has to be done in a way that maximizes and optimizes the assets that we have in this province and then allows us—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —to make the investments that we know we need in assets for the future, like transportation infrastructure—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.



I'm going to make this comment once and then move on to a more aggressive way to bring civility here. When the Premier or anyone on that side is answering, if I hear heckling from that side, I'm going to cut the answer short. The same goes on this side. Now I'll move in to individuals.

Final supplementary, please.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, since you've taken office, you've talked a lot about transparency and accountability, but your actions don't match up with the rhetoric. Your new Liberal member from Trinity-Spadina told us recently in committee that he believes in supporting openness and transparency, but only at the right time. That is pretty consistent with what we've seen from you thus far.

However, you have stated that, had various precautions being taken in the past, the gas plant scandal would never have happened. So we're asking you to take those precautions today and let the Auditor General do her job and look into every public asset sale before you close the deal. Why won't you agree with that? We all agree with the Auditor General and the impartiality there and the expertise there. It's the right way to go. Just say yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Auditor General will choose the areas that she wants to look at. I'm confident that as we move forward, as I say, on a review of and an action on optimizing the assets that belong to the people of Ontario, we are going to be able to realize real, new benefit from those assets. In fact, the council was asked to look at maximizing the value of Hydro One, OPG and LCBO to generate a better return, to provide a benefit to customers and to provide the opportunity for us to invest in transit and transportation infrastructure.

Ed Clark, who has led that review, made a speech last week. We will be looking forward to his interim report, and all of that information will be available to the people of Ontario, including the Auditor General.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the Premier: Clearly, Premier, you don't want to be accountable and transparent on that file, so let me try another one. We strongly believe that it's the duty of those of us who are fortunate enough to be elected to this place, on behalf of the public, to maintain transparency, accountability and openness.

You've talked about it a lot, but how can you reconcile that promise that you make so often, Premier, to be open and accountable when you've instructed your government committee members to hide financial information about your \$309-million MaRS bailout? Why won't you be open and transparent and provide the documents we're asking for?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just go over a little bit of background, because I know that the member opposite wants there to be—as we do—the best possible innovation and research in Ontario. He wants, as we do, start-up companies to have the support that they need.

We know that MaRS is a world-renowned centre of research and innovation. It's an organization that has generated economic activity of about \$3 billion and has helped or advised 1,400 companies to get started and to be able to expand.

Our priority has been, and it will continue to be, to protect Ontario's investment in that building. We fully expect that the \$224-million loan will be paid back in full. We are operating on that assumption and supporting MaRS in their innovation and research.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, we all know what MaRS is intended to do. It's a great objective. Our government was involved in starting phase 1, which we built, by the way, knowing that we could fill the building.

You went on. You knew fully, when you went on to phase 2—there were lots of media reports—that that building may very well be empty. Then you involved a private developer, Alexandria Real Estate, and then you changed the rules at Infrastructure Ontario—all of this without any transparency, without any light shining in at all from the Auditor General, without reporting to this House.

You owe us and you owe the taxpayers an explanation of what you're up to, and the best explanation is to show us the documents we want. We want the agreement between your government and Alexandria Real Estate. We want the details around the Infrastructure Ontario loan, which, at the very least, should be public.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member opposite knows that this building has been repeatedly valued at or above the amount that we've invested. I think that the member opposite also knows that it would be reckless, and it would jeopardize a conditional agreement, to make certain confidential documents public before that deal, that arrangement, had been completed.

We're not going to undermine an arrangement that would be in the best interests of the people of Ontario by providing information publicly that needs to be confidential for a period of time.

We are committed to being open and transparent. I want information to be available to the public and, obviously, to the members of the opposition as they ask for it, but not at the risk to the benefit of the people of Ontario. We're not going to undermine those commercially sensitive transactions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** To the Premier again: It clearly is déjà vu all over again. You obviously haven't learned anything from Ornge or eHealth or gas plants. You're continuing your propensity as Liberals to just throw more money after bad.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Economic Development, come to order.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Rather than saying no on phase 2—which, it was clear around here, you shouldn't have gone ahead and developed—you went ahead, using the tax-

payers' money, because you don't care about the tax-payers' money.

It's the same thing you did in Ornge, the same thing you did with gas plants, and the same thing you did at eHealth—just throw hundreds of millions out the door—and you refuse to be accountable and transparent for that.

Don't repeat the mistakes of the past. You've got two police probes going on now because of those mistakes in the past. Let's not have to call for another one. Give us the documents we want and be transparent.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

1100

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The minister responsible for infrastructure is reviewing the documents. We will release those documents responsibly.

But as I said, we will not undermine the best interests of the people of Ontario by releasing commercially sensitive documents when there is a process under way. We will not do that, because we know that MaRS is, and is going to continue to be, a success.

I would say to the member opposite that he should be careful as he undermines the rhetoric around the future of MaRS, because the fact is—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Thank you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —because he knows full well that there is expertise and innovation potential in this province. He knows full well that MaRS has been successful—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville: second time.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —and will continue to be successful. Part of that is making sure that that building is functioning at the highest capacity.

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Why does the Premier think it's better to have Ontario's local hydro companies in the hands of private, for-profit speculators rather than in the hands of Ontarians themselves?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I welcome back the members of the third party. I know that they've been working hard in their constituencies.

What the leader of the third party is asking about is the practical and sensible plan that we are moving forward with, to make sure that the assets of this province owned by the people of Ontario work to the very best advantage of the people of Ontario. That's the work that Ed Clark is doing with his council. He has said quite clearly that he doesn't believe that selling those assets is the right answer. He has said that.

I believe that the leader of the third party is probably having a bit of a hard time framing the question because in fact Ed Clark has said he agrees that selling those assets is not the right thing to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Last week, Ed Clark released his interim plan for our shared public assets at a private business luncheon. He released a plan for alcohol sales that he knew would get a lot of ink and tried to bury a plan to privatize hydro utilities.

Now, if this was this Premier's intention, why did she not campaign on Harris-style hydro privatization?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The assumptions about optimizing the value of Ontario's assets were part of our plan. We campaigned on it, and so did she. The leader of the third party campaigned on exactly the same fiscal assumptions that we campaigned on.

She knows full well that with Ed Clark having been asked to do his work, he is going to deliver an interim report. She also knows full well that he has said he agrees that selling off those assets is not the right thing to do.

He has also said that there are changes that can be made that will benefit the customers, will benefit the ratepayers, and will also provide the best benefit to the people of Ontario, because we will be able to then invest in transportation infrastructure that is much needed across this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On Friday, Ed Clark told Ontarians that he wanted public hydro companies to bring in "private capital" so "Ontario could sell down some of its interest...."

The Premier wants to bring private speculators into local hydro utilities. Then she wants to sell them off. Ontarians are going to be left paying for the costs of hydro and the profits of private energy speculators.

When you privatize a public company, I call that privatizing. When you sell off public ownership, I call that a sell-off. What does the Premier call it, and why didn't she call it like it is during the election campaign?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I was quite clear—we were quite clear—during the election that we were going to look at the assets of the people of this province and we were going to make sure that they were working at optimal capacity to provide for the opportunity for us to invest in new assets that are needed by the people of Ontario: transportation infrastructure.

What the leader of the third party is saying, Mr. Speaker, is that she would never change anything, ever, that she would not take a responsible and sensible look at assets that were purchased many years ago and find a way to make sure that they could work better. She would never do that. She would never take that responsible step.

I believe that does not serve the people of Ontario and would not serve the people of Ontario. I believe that there is a way to make change that actually benefits the future of the province.

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. New question.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My second question is for the Premier. The Premier is starting to behave as though Ontario's hydro system belongs to the Liberal Party of Ontario. Our public hydro companies belong to Ontarians, Speaker. The Premier is plunging headlong into a Mike Harris hydro privatization scheme. She hid this plan from Ontarians during the election.

Will she now come forward and commit to stopping and asking Ontarians first for their approval before she sells off their assets?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Education, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm laughing because the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is re-playing the attacks that were coming at us from the third party before the election, Mr. Speaker, because we were talking about doing this very thing—that we were going to look at the assets. If I read you from the text of the 2014 budget that was introduced in May: "The government will look at maximizing and unlocking value from assets it currently holds, including real estate holdings as well as crown corporations such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario."

It was right there, Mr. Speaker. That's what we ran on. That's what we brought to the people of Ontario. In fact, the assumptions in the budget were what she ran on as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** One of the things I think is clear is that that was part of the Trojan Horse budget that New Democrats did not support, Speaker.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Eglington—Lawrence will come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of the Environment, come to order.

Proceed, please.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Manitoba and Saskatchewan are two provinces that actually have protections built in for their public assets.

Will the Premier support New Democrats' call for a referendum on the sale of any of our crown jewels, or will she keep tight-lipped, as she was during the election campaign, regarding these schemes?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, again, I will just refer the leader of the third party to the text of the plan that we ran on. Our Moving Ontario Forward plan

includes a balanced and responsible approach to paying for investments in transportation infrastructure. The funds will be from dedicated sources of revenue, including asset optimization of \$3.15 billion, or 10.9%.

Mr. Speaker, we ran on this. We said that there are assets in the province of Ontario that need to be reviewed, that we need to make sure are working in the best interests of the people of Ontario, including the opportunities to find a better rate for the people of Ontario when it comes to hydro, to find ways to bring costs down for the people of Ontario and to make sure that we have the funds necessary to invest in transportation infrastructure, including transit, which the leader of the third party says she supports.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The public hydro system belongs to Ontarians, but the Premier's adviser is calling for "bringing in private capital" so that the province can "sell down ... its interest." Ed Clark wants to "dilute the government interest" and wants public hydro utilities to "seek out their own new partners—public or private."

Now, is the Premier going to privatize and sell off public assets without the approval of the Ontarians who actually own these assets, or will she do the right thing by the people of this province and give them their say on these schemes?

1110

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, I believe that there is a role for the private sector. I think the leader of the third party might want to ask her predecessors, when the NDP government signed nine private power-generating contracts, whether that was consistent with what she is saying now.

Mr. Speaker, we will be responsible. We have said we believe that these assets need to be in the hands of the people of Ontario. Ed Clark has agreed with that. We will move responsibly to make sure that these assets work for the people of Ontario, because we believe that we can recycle some of those funds and invest them in transportation infrastructure, and that is the responsible and sensible thing to do.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Welcome back, Premier. My question is for you.

Premier, you're proposing to eliminate 140,000 child care spaces throughout the entire province of Ontario. My question is: Why do you want to make it more difficult for Ontario parents like me, who are trying to find affordable and accessible child care that is close to their homes? Can you answer that question for us?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm a little bit confused by the nature of the question, because I have absolutely no plan to eliminate child care spaces. The only way I can figure out how the member opposite might have reached this conclusion is if we eliminate illegal child care spaces,

because what we are certainly doing is we have created a dedicated enforcement unit to look at unlicensed home child care spaces.

When we receive a complaint, we respond to that complaint very quickly. We have actually got a new bill before the House, which of course died on the order paper, but which we reintroduced. I'll be very pleased, in the supplementary, to talk about some of the steps that we're taking in that Child Care Modernization Act.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It doesn't surprise me that the minister is confused by the question, but I can tell you, certainly, having spoken with other parents across the province, this is a very real issue for them.

You are about to cut 140,000 child care spaces in this province and you have no plan. As a parent, I ask you: Why do you think you are better suited than me to make a child care decision for my child and every other child in this province?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** If you actually look at the Child Care Modernization Act, what you will find is that for those people who are licensed home child care providers, they will actually be able to increase the number of children that they serve. They will be allowed under the new legislation, which we hope we will have co-operation on in passing—you will find in the new legislation that we are increasing the number of children from five to six.

However, we also believe that, to ensure the safety of children, we should be asking unlicensed providers to follow the same rules that licensed home care providers already include, which is to count their own children in the count—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** —of children being cared for. But what we've also done in the legislation is to put new enforcement tools there, so that when people break the law—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** My question this morning is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Good morning, Minister. Thank you for reaching out to the Friends of the Duff-Baby Mansion when you were in Windsor. Thank you to the caucus for being in Windsor, in Ms. Gretzky's riding of Windsor West, and spending some money last weekend.

Speaker, one of the truly disturbing aspects of this growing MaRS scandal is this government's unwillingness to disclose crucial information that would shed some light on this \$400-million fiasco. For example, it refuses to tell us why, in 2010, it had to write a new regulation specifically to allow MaRS to be eligible for an Infrastructure Ontario loan, and it refuses to release the details of that loan agreement.

Minister, will this government finally release this crucial information and be transparent? Will you shed

some light—pull up the blinds, if you will—on this shady deal?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that all of my colleagues had a fantastic time in Windsor. Our meeting there went fantastically. Our party is really supercharged about being back here today. We have every confidence that we will continue to work hard with the good people of Windsor to continue to build a strong economy in Windsor. Certainly, we look forward to the member's advice going forward. It's a great part of our province. We are really proud to have been there on the weekend. I know each and every one of my colleagues—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Secondly, the member knows we have spent 10 hours together over the last two weeks in estimates committee. I've said many, many times that we will share all documents and information, and we have been doing that. But I think the member knows full well that I have to take advice from my deputy in terms of documents that may be commercially sensitive. If I were not to do that, I would be abdicating my responsibility as a minister. Surely the member wouldn't want me to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Quite frankly, I don't think I'm the only one for whom writing a new regulation, just to allow MaRS to qualify for a \$224-million loan, sets off alarm bells. This wasn't the regulation to expand eligibility of the IO loan program to a broader range of non-profits and charities. This was a secondary regulation that was designed to allow MaRS to pocket a \$224-million loan that they were in no position to repay.

Will this government admit that for the past four years, it has covered up the fact that it passed a regulation in secret that allowed MaRS to qualify for a \$224-million loan that this government knew MaRS was in no position to repay to the taxpayers of Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. It is impossible for this government to pass a regulation in secret. All regulations are absolutely public. They're posted in public, they're circulated in public for a period of time, even before they are passed. So that suggestion is beyond ridiculous.

But let me say this: I will continue to release whatever information we have on this and other issues. This government will continue to be open and transparent. But if the member is asking us to release information that's commercially sensitive, it would be abdicating my responsibility as a minister—and go against the advice of my deputy minister—to do that. That would also be abdicating our responsibility to the public and the commercial reputation of this province, which would do us great damage. That would simply not be a responsible thing to do.

We will be open and transparent. We have been; we'll continue to be. We'll release whatever documents we can, and we'll do it as quickly—



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### JOB CREATION

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. From canvassing door to door during the spring election to receiving calls coming into my constituency office, the economy is top of mind for residents of Davenport.

Over the summer, I have seen many reports that are saying Ontario's economy is on the right track and that our economic plan is working. To quote CIBC's report released in September, "Ontario has seen a notable resurgence." Last week, BMO released a very similar report, predicting strong growth in Ontario. This is great news for my riding of Davenport and the rest of the province.

Would the minister please inform the House about last month's job numbers and how our province has grown since the last global recession?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** That's a terrific question. I'm delighted to do that.

We have to be careful as we use month-to-month job numbers. They do fluctuate, but what they do indicate a trend.

I'm really happy to be able to get up on my feet today in this Legislature and say that for the first time since the global recession, we are now up over half a million net new jobs recovered since the recession. We're up half a million jobs—514,300, to be exact—since June 2009. If you compare us to the US, we're up over 190% in jobs since the global recession. In the US, they're at about 120%, or just a little bit above that.

What that tells me is that our plan to invest in our people, our plan to invest in infrastructure, and our plan to build a good, healthy business climate is working. We've come a long way. We still have further to go, and we're going to keep creating jobs in this province.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** This is great news for my constituents and all Ontarians. Our government should be very proud of this growth.

As many of us must hear, people in Davenport are concerned about youth employment. I know that our government has introduced many programs and initiatives to help youth enter and succeed in our province's job market. The youth jobs strategy that was introduced in the 2013 budget has shown real success. Would the minister please update the House on our success to combat youth unemployment?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** First and foremost, we all believe and understand that youth unemployment is still too high. It's almost double the unemployment rate for the rest of us, and that's unacceptable. That's why the Premier moved forward with our youth jobs strategy some time ago now. It's been about a year that it's been in place and already over 20,000 jobs have been created. Job oppor-

tunities have been created for young people across this province, and that's really important.

Last month alone, 12,600 young people found employment in Ontario. That was a fantastic month for youth, but we have a lot of work to keep doing. We're going to keep investing in creating job opportunities for our young people. We're going to keep investing in our youth jobs strategy, which is providing opportunities for young people to find employment. We're determined to continue to bring down youth unemployment. We've made great gains to date. We've got more work to do, and we're looking forward to continuing that good work.

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, I'd like to share with you a few headlines that I thought you might enjoy: The Globe and Mail, September 22, "Premier Wynne to Reveal Cabinet Plans in Bid to Boost Transparency"; CBC News, September 25, "Ontario Premier Promises More Transparency, Releases Mandate Letters for Ministers."

Premier, those headlines were less than a month ago, but so much has changed. Here's a few newer headlines: Toronto Star, October 14, "Liberal MPPs Block Release of MaRS Financial Details"; CBC News, October 15, "Liberals Won't Release Details of MaRS Office Tower Deal."

Premier, your member from Trinity-Spadina told the committee quite clearly that he believes in openness and transparency at the right time. So Premier, I ask you, do you agree with Mr. Dong's statement—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —and if so—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I remind this member and all members: When I stand, you sit.

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm really proud to be part of a government—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The right time is right now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds-Grenville is warned.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** —with a Premier who is absolutely committed to ensuring that as we do business in this province, we do it in a very straightforward, transparent way. That's very, very important to each and every one of our ministers.

If the member is asking this government to put out documents that our deputy minister and our legal folks in the ministry are telling us are commercially sensitive, does he really think it would be responsible for us to do that? Frankly, that would be abdicating my responsibility as a minister if I were to supersede that advice and release those documents.

What I will do is what we've committed to do a number of times in the last couple of weeks, and that's to



release all documents that exist that are not commercially sensitive, and with the documents that may be commercially sensitive we'll ask our ministry—and I have asked our ministry to release what they can of those documents. I think that's pretty fair.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Back to the Premier: Your minister was less than forthright. Our requests in committee were very simple and very straightforward. We asked for the original loan agreement between the government and MaRS, as well as the original business plan MaRS used to justify the loan. Our final request was for the contract between ARE and MaRS, which the government has bailed out for \$65 million. We offered that the committee would go in camera to protect any commercially sensitive information—we offered to go in camera to protect that information.

Premier, members of your government in committee voted against each and every motion. Each vote was a clear vote against openness and transparency.

Premier, when will you stay true to your words and table those documents to the estimates committee?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member's inaccurate, misinformed, over-the-top, silly rhetoric aside, yes, we will table documents to the estimates committee. What we will have to do is make sure those documents and the information we provide are not commercially sensitive. That's our responsibility. It's my responsibility as a minister and it's our responsibility as a government to ensure that we're serving the public interest.

I know the member understands that. I know what he's trying to do here as an opposition member, but I will not abdicate my responsibility as a minister to serve the public interest. I simply will not do that. I don't think that's an appropriate thing to do. I don't even think that's an appropriate request. But we will provide whatever information the committee has requested, provided it's not commercially sensitive.

## HOME CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. New Democrats believe that all low-paid PSWs should receive the promised raise increase for all of the hours that they work, but under the Liberal Trojan Horse budget the PSWs who bathe clients get the raise and those who feed them don't. Those who work in community mental health don't, and most PSWs don't see the wage applied to their travel time from client to client. For all of these PSWs, this Liberal promise is a broken promise.

Why did the minister choose to leave so many of those low-paid PSWs behind?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It's great to be back. I appreciate the question as well because it gives me the opportunity

to, first of all, acknowledge the tremendous critical work that our PSWs are doing right across this province in a number of venues, and certainly no more importantly than in our home care settings. I know that many Ontarians, particularly our seniors and those with complex needs, rely on our PSWs for their support. That's why I am so proud to be part of a government that has made a commitment to our PSWs who, quite frankly, are not adequately compensated, where we've committed to increasing their wages by \$4 an hour over the next three years. Of course, the party opposite, the third party, did not support those measures that we took.

I'm happy to talk about other measures beyond the wage increase that we're committed to as a government in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** New Democrats will continue to push for good living wages for all of the PSWs because right now there are so many of them that are falling through the big holes left behind in this Liberal promise. The minister has the opportunity to fix our home care system, but today it is as broken as ever and getting even more fragmented.

Now PSWs still don't know how many hours they have or if they will work next week. They are still being paid different wages for work of equal value, and many PSWs do not get their wage increases for time spent travelling. We're talking home care; they all have to travel.

Why doesn't the minister take this opportunity to fix, rather than continue with, this broken model for low-paid but vital health care workers?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I have great respect for the member opposite, but on this issue I have to say that the NDP has no authority to speak, and that's because it wasn't in your platform. It was in our budget, the budget that you voted against.

We're increasing the wages of our PSWs by \$4. We're also taking a number of important measures to increase and guarantee the sustainability of this important aspect of our health care system. We've added three million additional PSW hours in this province. We've added 2,500 new PSWs in our long-term-care homes alone in the last five years.

I'm glad that this gave me the opportunity to raise the important measures that we're taking, but I'm not going to take lessons from the NDP when it comes to our PSWs. We're working hard; we're seeing that progress.

1130

## AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, the people of this province are interested and excited about the government's local food strategy. More consumption of local food is better for our health and supportive of our local agricultural community and economy.

In my riding of Northumberland–Quinte West we are fortunate to have so many opportunities to shop locally. For example, the Cobourg Farmers' Market offers a great opportunity to support the local producers—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Finish, please.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Sorry, Speaker.

I know my constituents and people across the province are interested in what our government is doing to support local food. Could the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please update this House on the government's local food strategy?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** It's great to have the positive voice of the member for Northumberland–Quinte West return to this House. I do know that the member for Northumberland–Quinte West is a fixture every week at the Cobourg Farmers' Market.

I also know, over the last couple of weeks, that the member has been spending a lot of time with his farmers as they combine both corn and soybeans.

Buying locally, we know, invigorates our local communities. We know that it keeps the dollars circulating locally. The agri-food sector in Ontario generates \$34 billion in GDP, employs over 740,000 Ontarians each and every day, and we will—our government, through the efforts of all of us here—continue to support local farmers' markets and people buying local food.

In fact, on Friday, Domino's Pizza announced that 100% of their cheese will now be made of 100% Canadian milk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. My constituents will be pleased to hear that our government's commitment to local food remains strong, as the local food movement is strong in my community.

Minister, over the past few months, people have taken an interest in the part of the legislation that deals with farmers donating food to food banks. The tax credit for farmers was proclaimed on August 2, and I know the farmers and community food organizations are interested to know more details about this important amendment. Can the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please provide more details on this tax credit?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I hope I provide a full answer so the member doesn't want a late show.

As part of the Local Food Act, farmers will now be able to get a tax credit for donations of agricultural products to community food organizations, the first of its kind in Canada.

I want to pay tribute this morning to the member from Sarnia–Lambton, who brought forward the private member's bill and who joined with me and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in Hamilton a few short weeks ago to make this announcement.

Mr. Speaker, not only will this tax credit benefit farmers who generously donate and provide healthier, nutritious local food for those who need it most; the tax credit moved forward because of the work this govern-

ment has invested in with stakeholders to develop this policy. In fact, when we were in Hamilton one of the local farmers donated 1,000 pounds of hamburger to the local food bank in Hamilton to make this happen.

## SCHOOL TRUSTEES

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, it's my first question to you so I hope you'll be kind to me in your response. Minister, will you require school boards, including the Toronto District School Board, to post the expenses of their trustees online?

**The Hon. Liz Sandals:** Certainly, if trustees and school boards wish to have a policy that requires them to post their expenses online, we're quite happy to support that. The current state of the law is that school boards are required to have an expense policy which complies with the broader public sector expense policy.

In the case of the Toronto District School Board, which is what brought all of this up, when the audit committee came to us and said, amongst other things, that they didn't have a policy and they were concerned about expenses, we actually appointed a third party auditor to go in and look at them, and directed them to come in line with that BPS directive and create a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, I thought your government believed in transparency and accountability, following a string of disasters like the power plant cancellations, Ornge, eHealth and now MaRS. The list goes on and on.

I think parents and taxpayers have the right to know the expenses their elected officials receive, including their trustees, especially when we know the funding shortfalls in areas such as student transportation and special needs and the fact that we are going into debt in the province of Ontario at about \$1 billion a month right now.

The media outlets like the Toronto Star should not have to pay tens of thousands of dollars for FOI requests. When will this House be assured that all elected officials will have their expenses posted online?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** As I say, we're quite willing to look at that as an option in our accountability legislation going forward, but right now I have no legal authority to order that to happen. When a board has not used the authority which it does have, has not complied with the law, then we have directed them to come in line with the law.

But quite frankly, I think this is why people all over the province need to be thinking very carefully over the next week about trustee elections, because the board is required to set an open and transparent policy that complies with the broader public service directive around expenses. If their local board has not followed that direction, then they should be looking very carefully at



the trustees that they elect, because it's ultimately up to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

### ELLIOT LAKE INQUIRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you. My question is to the Premier.

Premier, Justice Paul Bélanger's report on the Elliot Lake mall collapse was detailed, conscientious and included excellent advice for the government. But Justice Bélanger also expressed deep frustration that a crucial government report on deteriorating parking structures was not disclosed to the commission until long after the hearings and policy round tables were over, even though some inquiry participants had helped prepare that report.

Justice Bélanger said that had he known of this government report, his mandate would certainly have been affected. How is it possible that government officials failed to disclose this document?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Attorney General, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and I were in Elliot Lake last week when Justice Bélanger issued his report. I would like to thank the commissioner and his team for this very thorough study of the Algo Centre Mall tragedy, and I wanted to offer my deepest sympathy again to both families.

It was an unfortunate event that happened. I was there when this happened, I was there for the funeral of one of the victims, and I was there again with them, with the population of the Elliot Lake, receiving the report.

The commissioner has very, very important recommendations in his report. I want to thank everyone who was involved with the commissioner, all the individuals and organizations that contributed to his findings and recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again to the Premier: Commissioner Bélanger said there remains a big question his report is unable to answer: Why didn't the government implement the policy recommendations of this missing report?

Justice Bélanger wrote, "If those reasons did in fact exist, they should have been made known to me." But they weren't, and this resulted in what he called missed opportunities. Will the government investigate and explain to Ontarians why this document was not disclosed to the inquiry process?

1140

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Let me first echo my sympathies and condolences to the Perizzolo and Aylwin families, who lost their two loved ones in that tragedy at Elliot Lake two years ago. I want to thank the member from

Algoma–Manitoulin for his hard work, along with this committee, on this important issue as well. He was present when the Attorney General and I were in Elliot Lake last week to receive the report from the commissioner.

While we were there, Speaker, we assured the community that we will be engaging in a very thorough analysis of the report, the work that Mr. Justice Bélanger has done, and have undertaken to get back to the community in about a year's time—as he has advised us—with specific steps as to how we will implement his recommendations.

### ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Our government has demonstrated its commitment to investing in people so that everyone has an opportunity to succeed and fully participate in the economy. I know that this House is keen to hear how this government will continue to help aboriginal populations across Ontario.

There are over 9,000 entrepreneurs in Ontario who identify as aboriginal. While there is positive growth for aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs in Ontario, we know that aboriginal businesses and communities also face challenges. This includes difficulty in accessing capital and a lack of community-level capacity to leverage economic development opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: As a former business owner, I am most interested to know: What is our government going to do to ensure that aboriginal people can get support for business, employment and training opportunities?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I want to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for that question. My ministry and our government have been working across government with all our aboriginal partners to truly advance aboriginal economic development. There are many things that an entrepreneur needs to think about, research and undertake before starting a business.

Earlier this month, I announced that the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund is now open for business. It is a three-year, \$25-million initiative. The important part of the plan is to provide jobs and a prosperity fund and our overall plan of working to improve socio-economic outcomes for aboriginal people.

Through three funding streams, the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund will help aboriginal businesses, communities and organizations create, diversify and collaborate in their business activities. I can tell this House that improving socio-economic outcomes for aboriginal peoples is an important part of our government's economic plan. It's an investment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** —in the future prosperity of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I stand; you sit.

Supplementary?



**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Constituents in my riding will be very interested to hear about the opportunities we are creating for aboriginal people. I am very glad to see that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is continuing its work on economic development for aboriginal communities. It is vital for communities to engage and collaborate with each other, and that is what the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund is promoting. The fund is not only providing support to expand aboriginal businesses, but it is also continuing to invest in new development projects.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide additional information to the House about the three different funding streams and how the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund will assist aboriginal communities in reaching their full potential?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The elements of the fund consist of creation, diversification and collaboration. The first funding stream, the Business and Community Fund, will help create economic opportunities by financing projects that will expand economic capacity in individual aboriginal communities.

The second funding stream, the Economic Diversification Grants, will help aboriginal communities identify new high-potential opportunities in emerging sectors.

Lastly, the third funding stream, the Regional Partnership Grants, will help focus on helping communities collaborate to create skills training and employment opportunities across the various regions of Ontario.

I look forward to working in partnership with aboriginal communities through this development fund. As I said earlier, together we can help develop aboriginal communities, to help construct and to add to the infrastructure and the business opportunities of Ontario.

#### TRUCKING SAFETY

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, the secret is out: Your government has been asleep at the wheel for more than a decade while lax standards for trucking licensing have jeopardized the safety of Ontario motorists. Make no mistake: Allowing unregulated trucking schools to turn out unprepared truckers is a clear threat to public safety on Ontario roads, and it's your responsibility to act when that safety is compromised.

Recently, a Toronto Star report revealed four unregulated schools identified for enforcement action still being allowed to operate, and you've done nothing to stop them. Why would anybody believe you will finally get this right after years of your government spinning its wheels?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member opposite for that question. Of course, I am aware of the Toronto Star stories on this particular topic. The member opposite will know that here in Ontario, thanks to many years of hard work on the part of not only this government but specifically the Ministry of Transportation and all of our road user safety partners, Ontario enjoys having amongst the safest roads in all of North America.

The member opposite would also know, I suspect, if he had read to the end of all of the stories, that I had the opportunity to speak to the Toronto Star and make it very clear that our government accepts nothing less than the very best in terms of road user safety for the people of Ontario. That's why I have undertaken to work very closely with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and with industry representatives to make sure that we can come up with a system that allows us to have mandatory entry-level training for truck drivers in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, we need action now. Your dithering and delay only further damages the reputation of reputable schools and drivers while continuing to compromise our safety.

The Star report indicated that, further to the incompetency of allowing unregulated schools to turn out untrained drivers, some of your own test centres are not even testing properly. It found, during a dozen road tests at your Woodbridge centre, that not one learner was taken on a 400-series expressway, this despite a ministry policy requiring them to do so.

Minister, do you agree with your test centres issuing licences to truckers without ever taking them on the highway?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I think it's important to note, as I said in my opening answer, the fact that Ontario continues to have amongst the safest roads in all of North America. I think it's important to note that we introduced a training standard for class AZ driver's licence training programs back in 2010. Since that time—this is where the facts take over this part of the story—we have seen the number of fatal conditions involving large trucks on Ontario's roads reach a five-year low.

Having said that, we know that more work is required to be done. It's why Ministry of Transportation officials will continue to monitor and audit all of our truck driving testing centres. It's why I have also undertaken to work closely with the Ontario Trucking Association, with the Ministry and Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, so that we can work towards implementing a mandatory training program for truck drivers in Ontario.

#### CHILD POVERTY

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is to the minister responsible for poverty reduction. Six years ago, the minister wrote, "Poverty is a problem we can't afford." She said, "The time for action is now."

She set what was called an achievable target, to reduce child poverty by 25% in five years, a target New Democrats and anti-poverty people strongly supported. Clear targets and timelines are the only way to hold the government accountable for promises they make to the most vulnerable.

Her new poverty reduction strategy has no timelines to cut child poverty, no target for reducing homelessness. Why does the minister have no idea when, or even if, this government will deliver on its promises once again?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question, because it does give me an opportunity to talk about a very, very important initiative that is core to our values as a government, and that is the reduction of poverty.

Speaker, we released our first Poverty Reduction Strategy, which set a very ambitious goal of reducing child poverty. If you actually look at that report—and I urge you to read it—you will see that we laid out the conditions under which we could have achieved a 25% reduction in five years. We were very clear about what the province could and should do, and we have done all of the things that we said we would do. The federal government, however, did not step up in the way they would have had to if we were to achieve that goal.

We continue to call on the federal government to make reducing child poverty a priority for them, because we are all better off when the least of us are better off.

Speaker, I would thank the member opposite for the interest—and continue to work to reduce child poverty.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** We have a large group of people here in the members' gallery. They're from the OPSEU developmental services sector. If you'll just indulge me, I'll name them into the record: Patti Markland, Allan May, Kier Verner-Prokop, Angela Bach, Jennifer Bérubé, Erin Rice, Lisa Fewster, Sue Fairweather, Amanda Picott, Tracy More, Sheila Keenan, Emily Visser and Karen McKinnon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to introduce Maureen Trask, Don Trask, Linda Wintemute Smith and Michael Smith from the region of Waterloo. It's their first time here at Queen's Park, and they're here to witness the introduction of a new petition.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce, from the United Way of Toronto, Stephanie Procyk and Nauman Khan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would also like to invite some guests today from OPSEU who are here to witness a new petition. They're from the youth corrections sector: Emily Visser, Noemi Khondo and Jonathan Guider. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise in this House today to speak to an initiative which I believe will significantly increase access to health care services in Muskoka. Earlier this year a detailed proposal was put forward by the district of Muskoka to establish new nursing stations in commun-

ities across Muskoka. In the July session of the Legislature I had an opportunity to question the Minister of Health on this proposal. He agreed to meet with the Muskoka district chair and recently followed through on his commitment.

I, along with district chair John Klinck, commissioner of community services Rick Williams, Lake of Bays mayor Bob Young and Muskoka Lakes mayor Alice Murphy, attended the meeting.

I'm very pleased with Minister Hoskins's decision to give the green light to the Muskoka nursing station proposal. In particular, the minister agreed to a three-year demonstration project, including funding for primary care staff in community hubs in Dorset and Port Carling, as well as a new mobile unit to provide service to Port Severn and Severn Bridge, and the reinstatement of nursing support for the Wahta First Nation.

The Ministry of Health is currently working with the local health integration network and the district, as well as other relevant agencies, to finalize the details. I'm confident that the process of implementing the district of Muskoka proposal has already begun.

With the great success of nursing stations in Parry Sound district and the significant community support that already exists for these nursing stations, it's my strong belief that this local project will be very successful.

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to direct my statement today to the honourable members of the Liberal caucus, our government. The people of Ontario have given you a majority mandate. They have placed their faith and trust in you to deliver on the promises you made, especially given your reassurances that your government is transparent and accountable to the people of Ontario.

As the third party opposition, New Democrats have the responsibility to hold you and your record to account, and your record isn't good. My staff and I have spoken with countless constituents who come to my office asking what exactly this government is doing with their hard-earned tax dollars because what they see is your government failing to deliver on desperately needed funding for crucial services like the developmental services office, community care access centres and mental health services. They see Ontario government resources used inappropriately on joint vehicle safety blitzes with the CBSA, resulting in deportations. A lack of transparency there prompted me to write to the Ombudsman requesting a third-party investigation.

The people of this province need to see their government earn the trust they gave you in June. They need to see where their tax dollars are going. They deserve transparency and accountability. They need to know their loved ones will be safe and well cared for in hospitals and long-term-care homes and that their families can actually afford to live in Ontario.

I am asking you now to come through on your promises to the people of Ontario.



## ONTARIO DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I rise today in the House to recognize a great organization, the Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association, whose head office is in my riding of Burlington, and to acknowledge its executive director, Margaret Carter, who is with us today.

In honour of Ontario Dental Hygiene Week, I'd like to recognize and thank the 7,000 members of the ODHA for serving our province for over 50 years and thank them for their ongoing commitment to the delivery of primary health care and wellness promotion in our province.

Dental hygiene has been recognized and practised as a profession for over 60 years, and since 1963, the ODHA has been representing the interests and needs of its members. Dental hygienists help clients attain and maintain optimal oral health, as well as prevent periodontal or gum disease and cavities.

Thanks to the amendment to the Dental Hygiene Act, many dental hygienists have established independent practices that often include a mobile component which allows them to provide services to clients who are in long-term-care homes or restricted to their own homes, those in rural and remote communities, as well as those who have difficulty travelling to a dentist.

With a mounting body of research showing a link between periodontal disease and countless other health conditions, the preventative treatment provided by dental hygienists takes on increasing importance.

Mr. Speaker, it is these entrepreneurial dental hygienists, as well as those working in dental practices, education and public health, that today I ask all members of the House to join me in saluting during Ontario Dental Hygiene Week.

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** This coming Thursday is Special Olympics Day in North Bay. This takes on an even greater significance this year as Special Olympics Ontario and the North Bay Police Service have developed a collaborative partnership to celebrate the Change for Champions campaign. The primary focus for the campaign is to paint North Bay red to create awareness and funds in support of the 2015 Special Olympics Provincial Winter Games, which are being held in North Bay in January 2015. My hometown will play host to 450 athletes and coaches during the event.

Part of this campaign is a red shoelace drive in our city where local individuals, businesses and organizations are encouraged to get on board. All donations will be provided to the Adopt an Athlete program.

Special Olympics enriches the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through active participation in sport. Special Olympics provides world-class sport opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities daily in communities across the province and in over 160

countries around the world. Speaker, I want to acknowledge your special role in the Special Olympics as well.

I'm pleased that my riding of Nipissing is playing host to this world-class event. I wish to encourage residents to get involved with the Paint North Bay Red campaign to benefit these remarkable athletes and support them throughout the Special Olympics.

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It's always a pleasure to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the people I represent in London West. Today I wanted to share with MPPs an important initiative that has been spearheaded by the London Small Business Centre in my community.

The September 2014 employment statistics from StatsCan show a decline in the number of people employed in the London CMA, with many people having given up looking for work because of frustration over the lack of decent opportunities. In this struggling economy, small business ownership provides a possible solution to increase labour market participation among unemployed, underemployed and discouraged workers.

To better understand the motivations and barriers to entrepreneurship, as well as awareness of existing supports, an entrepreneurial climate study was commissioned by the London Small Business Centre, working with a cross-sector committee of regional business and economic development organizations. Over 1,500 people from four communities in southwestern Ontario were surveyed, and the results were released to the community last week. The results suggest that entrepreneurship may indeed provide an opportunity to increase labour market participation.

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The report provides rich data to provide a context for next steps in initiating cross-sector collaborations to support entrepreneurship, particularly among those who are in the early stages of considering an entrepreneurial venture, as well as those who are underrepresented or disadvantaged in our labour market.

## TANNIS FOOD DISTRIBUTORS

**Mr. John Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and to congratulate Tannis Food Distributors, who are celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. A family-owned business founded as Tannis Trading Co. on Laurier Avenue by brothers George Nesrallah and Toufic Tannis, and later led by Toufic's widow, Souad, it has grown from a small, cash-and-carry provider of dry goods to a major food service distributor in eastern Ontario, with a full line of dry goods, fresh and frozen products. Moving its base of operations into Ottawa South in 1981, it has more than tripled in size, to a 126,000-square-foot warehouse.

Still family-owned and -operated, employing 170 people, the company continues to be deeply involved in our community. Through its foundation, Tannis 21,

named for Souad and her 21 grandchildren, more than \$1 million has been contributed to local hospitals, health facilities, research and other charities.

The family's second generation continues to manage the day-to-day operation of the company and this week they will be hosting their semi-annual food show themed "Celebrating Canada."

To the Tannis family and all their staff and their families, congratulations on 75 years of business, and best wishes for a great fall food show and continued success in our community.

#### BEN TeKAMP

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I rise to pay tribute to Ben TeKamp, a man whose life set the gold standard by which commitment to community service is measured. Ben held many titles: three-term Brockville mayor, honorary colonel of the Brockville Rifles regiment, international rowing coach, teacher, husband and father.

But to the city of Brockville and the many thousands of lives made better by knowing him, he was simply our beloved Ben. His death last week at the age of 69 is a tremendous loss for Brockville. The community said its final farewell last Wednesday when hundreds lined the downtown streets to reflect on Ben's remarkable legacy as the funeral procession passed.

Our true character is revealed in tough times, and Ben faced many, whether during his years as mayor or most recently with his health. But no matter the test, Ben's kindness, humility and relentless optimism that appealed to the best in each of us never waned. His style was quiet, but don't be fooled: Ben was a tremendous leader.

Perhaps his finest moment came just a few months into his first team as mayor, in 1998, during the ice storm disaster. Ben's reassuring voice on the radio was a source of comfort and lifted our spirits, giving us confidence to get through that crisis.

To his wife Cathy, his son Mark and daughter Robin, I hope the outpouring of genuine love from our community for Ben offers you some comfort in your grief. He'll always have a cherished place in the hearts of those who knew him, and we thank you for letting us share him with you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it a point of order? Can I ask that it be held until after statements?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I thought statements were done, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, we still have other statements. Thank you.

#### STUDENTS OF ETOBICOKE CENTRE

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Since June I've had the distinct honour of representing the people of Etobicoke Centre in this Legislature. The past few months have left me with an appreciation of the incredible responsibility each of us hold as MPPs and, by extension, underscores the importance of encouraging our constituents to get involved in

the democratic process. I believe that that involvement has to begin with our youth.

Last week I had the opportunity to meet with the impressive students of Kipling Collegiate Institute, right here at the Legislative Assembly. Since their studies commenced this fall, other students from Etobicoke Centre—including Broadacres and Transfiguration of Our Lord—have also visited our Legislature.

Over the last month, I've had the distinct honour of joining students in their classrooms to discuss civics in Ontario: at Valleyfield Junior School, Transfiguration of Our Lord, and St. Demetrius. After these experiences, I'm looking forward to visiting grade 10 students at Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial Academy next week, and to Kingsway College, Rosethorn, Eatonville Junior and All Saints schools visiting this Legislature in the coming months.

What struck me most, Mr. Speaker, in my conversations with these students were their insightful questions and the breadth of their knowledge about how important it is that we have the right processes to make the right decisions as a province. My conversations with the students of Etobicoke Centre leave me with great hope for what governments of the future can and will achieve in Ontario under these future leaders.

I thank each of these students for their visits, for their invitations to join them in their classrooms and for their dedication to the democratic health of Ontario for generations to come.

#### DEWSON STREET JUNIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Since I was elected as the member for Davenport in June, I've had the pleasure of greeting a number of school groups from my riding at the Legislature. These visits have been a rewarding part of my new job as an MPP. It's always a treat to speak to young people about the work we do here at Queen's Park and the importance of public service.

I was very disappointed, then, that I could not meet a group of students from Dewson Street Junior Public School when they visited on Friday. As you know, Mr. Speaker, members of the Liberal caucus were in Windsor for our provincial council.

Dewson is a wonderful school in Davenport, located near the corner of College and Ossington. It boasts an active parent community and a dedicated faculty. Students at Dewson are high achievers, consistently scoring above the provincial averages on EQAO assessments.

I hope that I'll have the opportunity to show students and parents from Dewson around the Legislature on another occasion.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Windsor—Tecumseh on a point of order.



**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Speaker, with your indulgence, if I could introduce a friend from Windsor who is here.

Charlie Hotham, the president of Hotham building supplies, is the president of the Windsor Construction Association. He's here to invite you all to attend the reception at 5 o'clock in the dining room with the construction association of Ontario.

Charlie Hotham, welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I would be remiss if I didn't mention this today, Mr. Speaker. Although he's not here, he's here in my heart, and that's my son Matthieu Mantha. It's his birthday. He's 19 years old today. I wish him a very safe day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** These are the kinds of points of order that make me smile.

I want to thank all members for their statements.

The member from Nipissing made reference—for those who do not know, I'm on the Ontario board of Special Olympics Ontario, and I will be making available, in support of our games in North Bay, through the member, the red shoelaces that are symbolic of Special Olympics Ontario. I would encourage all of you to get involved locally and pay them a visit. They're one of the best examples of athletes I've ever seen in my life.

#### ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that on July 24, 2014, Her Honour the Administrator has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

#### TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment the following reports from parliamentary officers were tabled: on August 14, the 2012-13 annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer; on October 7, the 2013-14 annual report of the Environmental Commissioner.

I have another "I beg."

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Miller, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, assumes ballot item number 9 and Mr. Mantha assumes ballot item number 16.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates on the estimates selected and not selected for the committee's consideration.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Ms. Forster from the Standing Committee on Estimates presents the committee's report as follows:

Pursuant to the order of the House dated July 24, 2014, the estimates 2014-15 of the following ministries and offices have been selected for consideration: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, five hours; Ministry of Infrastructure, 10 hours; Ministry of Transportation, 10 hours; Ministry of Community and Social Services, five hours; Ministry of Energy, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Finance, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 15 hours; Ministry—

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**Interjections:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Dispense? Dispensed.

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the report of the committee is deemed to be received and the estimates of ministries and offices named therein as not being selected for consideration are deemed to be concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN CONCERNING VECTOR-BORNE AND ZOONOTIC DISEASES ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE CADRE ET LE PLAN D'ACTION PROVINCIAUX CONCERNANT LES MALADIES ZOONOTIQUES ET À TRANSMISSION VECTORIELLE

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to require a provincial framework and action plan concerning vector-borne and zoonotic diseases / Projet de loi 27, Loi exigeant un cadre et un plan d'action provinciaux concernant les maladies zoonotiques et à transmission vectorielle.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'll just read from the explanatory note.

The bill enacts the Provincial Framework and Action Plan concerning Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases Act, 2014.

The act requires the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to develop a provincial framework and action plan that establishes a provincial surveillance program, standardized educational materials and guidelines regarding the prevention, identification, treatment and management of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases. The framework and action plan must also promote research in connection with vector-borne and zoonotic diseases.

For the purposes of the act, vector-borne and zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases whose transmission involves animal hosts or vectors, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), West Nile virus disease, Lyme disease and Ebola virus disease.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction of bills? The member from Welland.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Davenport. Sorry.

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

Mrs. Martins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month/ Projet de loi 28, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois du patrimoine hispanique.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize to the member from Davenport, and to the member from Welland for surprising her that she had a private member's bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Mr. Speaker, Ontario is home to 400,000 Canadians of Hispanic origin, many of whom I'm very proud to represent in my riding of Davenport.

Hispanic Canadians represent a dynamic community that has made an important contribution to the growth and prosperity of the province of Ontario. By proclaiming October as Hispanic Heritage Month, the province will recognize the rich contributions of Hispanic Canadians to the fabric of Ontario. Hispanic Heritage Month will be an opportunity to remember, celebrate, and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements and contributions of Hispanic people in this province.

## MEDICINE AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MÉDECINS

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Medicine Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les médecins.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Currently, the Health Professions Procedural Code requires the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to maintain a public record of its members, containing certain information.

The bill amends the Medicine Act, 1991, to provide that the register must also include information about complaints, cautions and civil actions or proceedings against a member as well as information about deaths occurring in patients under the member's care.

The register would also include comparable information from other jurisdictions in which the member practised.

## PETITIONS

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Great to be back.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Jagmeet.

## MISSING PERSONS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and



"Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

"Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

"Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

"Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause."

It is my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition, and I will give it to page Alex.

#### CHELTENHAM BADLANDS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Heritage Trust holds title to the Cheltenham Badlands, and the Rouge Trail conservancy has management responsibilities for the site under an agreement with the OHT; and

"Whereas community consultation and engagement is essential for the protection of the Cheltenham Badlands and surrounding areas; and

"Whereas local residents should be actively involved in all discussions about the Cheltenham Badlands and related projects in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government fully fund the Cheltenham Badlands management plan, which includes but is not limited to the fencing of the geological feature, viewing platforms, boardwalks, perimeter fencing, trail maintenance and other accessory requirements as part of a complete and approved management plan."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

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"Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

"Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

"Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding."

I couldn't agree with this more. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Adam to bring to the Clerk.

#### CORNWALL OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many people use this" Cornwall recreation area "200 acres to walk their dogs on the scenic trails around the quarry. The MNR has stocked the quarry with trout every year for at least 40 years. The quarry is also great for bass fishing. This provides year-round enjoyment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Reopen the Cornwall recreation area trout quarry."

I agree with this and will be passing it to page Faith.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To add to the thousands already delivered, I read this:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

"Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

"Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

"Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

"That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to add my signature and give it to Noah, the wonderful page, to be delivered to the Clerk.

## RURAL AND NORTHERN ONTARIO TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the loss of transportation service will further destabilize rural economies and impede on residents' ability to get to school, work, doctor or hospital appointments, or any other service unavailable locally;

"Whereas the prosperity, productivity and participation of all segments of society depends on a viable, accessible transportation network;

"Whereas the lack of a transportation service negatively impacts those people with special needs, accessibility challenges, seniors and those living below the poverty level;

"Whereas Greyhound Canada plans to cut bus service and Via Rail plans to cut train service in rural Ontario;

"Whereas there is no secondary carrier serving rural Ontario's students, workers, volunteers, tourists, business travellers and any resident without a driver's licence;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately strike an all-party committee at Queen's Park to study transportation needs in rural and northern Ontario."

I fully support this, will affix my name and send it with page Jagmeet again. We're quite a team.

## MISSING PERSONS

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

"Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

"Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

"Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

"Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and sign and attach my name.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition signed by a great many of my constituents who are very concerned about the siting of a new landfill site in the county of Oxford; it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the purpose of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to 'provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.'...; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to put this petition on the record on behalf of my constituents.

## EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

"(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

"(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario."

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page Alex to take to the table.

## SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the select committee, entitled Inclusion and Opportunity: A New Path for Developmental Services in Ontario, was tabled in the Legislature on July 22, 2014;



"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That government of Ontario immediately review the final report and commence the implementation of the recommendations of the select committee, as contained in the final report."

I'm in full agreement with its contents, Mr. Speaker, and pleased to affix my signature to it.

### MISSING PERSONS

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from people across the province.

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

"Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

"Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

"Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

"Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permission to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause."

I am pleased to affix my name to this, and I will give it to page Renée.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning major changes to services provided by OHIP for physiotherapy as of August 1st, 2013; and

"Whereas this" change "will drastically reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year for people who are currently eligible for 100 treatments annually; and

"Whereas funding for physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes would be cut by almost 50%, from an estimated \$110 million per year to \$58.5 million per year; and

"Whereas ambulatory seniors in retirement homes would have to travel offsite for physiotherapy; and

"Whereas under the changes scheduled for August 1, the cost of visits under the CCAC (community care access centre) model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather

than the current fee of \$12.20 per visit through OHIP physiotherapy providers; and

"Whereas these changes will deprive seniors and other eligible clients from the many health and mobility benefits of physiotherapy;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the delisting of OHIP physiotherapy clinics as of August 1st not proceed and that the provincial government guarantee there will be no reduction in services currently available for seniors, children and youths, people with disabilities and all those who are currently eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll sign my name to this and send it with page Josée.

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### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 2013, 16 construction workers in Ontario were killed in tragic falls, almost 3,400 WSIB fall claims were accepted, and many other falls were never reported;

"Whereas in addition to the human tragedy of workplace falls, the financial cost of each year's WSIB fall claims is about \$100 million;

"Whereas the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador implemented new fall protection training regulations on January 1, 2012, after which fall claims declined by 25%;

"Whereas a similar training requirement and result in Ontario could prevent over 800 fall tragedies each year and avoid \$25 million in costs with the WSIB; and

"Whereas in 2010, the Ontario government promised to implement a similar training requirement by December 2011, but still has not done so; and has thereby left workers at risk;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Labour to make saving workers' lives a priority and stop delaying fall protection training regulations" in Ontario.

I sign my signature to the petition and deliver it to page Félix.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas collecting and restoring old vehicles honours Ontario's automotive heritage while contributing to the economy through the purchase of goods and services, tourism, and support for special events; and

"Whereas the stringent application of emissions regulations for older cars equipped with newer engines can result in fines and additional expenses that discourage car collectors and restorers from pursuing their hobby; and

"Whereas newer engines installed by hobbyists in vehicles over 20 years old provide cleaner emissions than the original equipment; and

"Whereas car collectors typically use their vehicles only on an occasional basis, during four to five months of the year;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians who collect and restore old vehicles by amending the appropriate laws and regulations to ensure vehicles over 20 years old and exempt from Drive Clean testing shall also be exempt from additional emissions requirements enforced by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks."

I'm pleased to affix my signature, and I'll send it to the table with page Faith.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time that we have available this afternoon for petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Mr. Flynn moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour/ Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I start, let me tell you that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the wonderful member from Barrie.

It's a pleasure to rise today, and I'm really happy to rise for second reading of Bill 18. The proposed legislation we're putting before the House today is both timely and necessary. Ontario has introduced the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act to protect our province's most vulnerable workers and to increase fairness for both employees and for businesses.

In a lot of ways, the introduction of this bill for second reading is the story of Ontario. It's the story of people who come to this country and begin new lives. Often, they're the people in our society who are viewed as being the most vulnerable, the people who are starting out in life, the people who are starting out in work life in Canada who may not understand the rules, the rights or the responsibilities they have in their new home.

What we're doing today is, we're taking action that's going to provide a more consistent, a more transparent and a more fair approach to such things as setting Ontario's minimum wage. In this bill, we propose legislation that will index future minimum wage adjustments to Ontario's consumer price index. This approach has been

supported to date by both employees and employers in the province of Ontario, and is based on the recommendations of an independent advisory panel that was established.

The Minimum Wage Advisory Panel was established in July 2013 as part of a commitment we made in the 2013 budget that was composed of employer and labour representatives, community representatives, anti-poverty groups, and students. The panel's report was based on extensive research. It was based on feedback that came in from over 400 Ontarians.

What it did was it recommended that the minimum wage be revised annually and that, going forward, it be linked to the consumer price index. In speaking to the requests of business, it was asked that at least four months' notice be given of these changes and that a five-year full review be conducted with a panel of stakeholders and an independent chair at a point in the future. Our government accepted these recommendations and is now moving ahead with them.

Under our proposals, the first CPI adjustment would take effect on October 1, 2015, with notice to be given to the public at least six months before that. It's important to remember that when the Liberals first came to office in 2003, we came into office with a minimum wage that had been frozen for eight years in a row. That was not fair to workers, who saw cost-of-living increases while their wages stayed frozen for that period of time.

That's why our government, over the years, has increased the minimum wage from the \$6.85 we inherited to the \$11 that it is today. We increased it during good times, but we also increased it during the depths of the recession because we thought it was the right thing to do and what hard-working families deserved.

However, in the past, increases to minimum wages have been made on a very ad hoc basis. They're subject to the political process of this place, and we feel, on this side of the House, that that's not fair to workers. They didn't know what their hourly wage would be from one year to the next. It was unpredictable for businesses that couldn't plan for the future and it was really based on the political whims of the party that formed the government at that particular point in time. That's why this government has introduced this legislation to remedy that and to index the minimum wage as we move forward.

This bill, if it is passed, will also have another effect, though. It will level the playing field for employers who play by the rules and who obey the laws we have here in the province of Ontario. By acting to strengthen workplace protection for the most vulnerable and increasing fairness provisions for employees and businesses, we're helping to build a stronger workplace, and that, in turn, builds a stronger economy, and that certainly, in turn, builds a stronger province here in Ontario.

This proposed legislation is part of the overall plan we have and a commitment that this government has to lead from the activist centre. It's consistent with our strategy that we've announced to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario.



Our government fully recognizes that the nature of work in the province of Ontario, in our country and throughout the globe is changing and that the rules we have in place to govern those workplaces have to keep up as well. Employees may have a difficult time establishing themselves financially, which has a negative impact on the economic growth we all want for this province. That speaks to those people who are just establishing themselves in the province of Ontario.

It's also a key factor in poverty and those who find themselves living in near poverty. Historically, a significant portion of vulnerable workers has been recent immigrants. They've been women, they've been young workers and they've been those individuals who come from minority ethnic groups. These individuals often find themselves starting their work life in Ontario or in Canada in precarious jobs.

I'm standing here today speaking to the second reading of Bill 18, but I want to thank those people who have helped form this bill: those people who have provided input; those people who have provided their expertise.

I want to particularly thank the United Way, McMaster University and the Law Commission of Ontario, who helped lead a dialogue around these very important issues and put some very important issues on the table. But they also put forward many thoughtful solutions which are reflected in the bill. It shows that, out of positive conversations and constructive recommendations, you can get real, meaningful action that can protect people in the province of Ontario. It shows that we have a government—and, I believe, a Legislature—that both listens and acts. It demonstrates that through well-intended engagement with people who may have a variety of opinions on issues we can make progress, and that we can take the steps that are necessary to move forward as a province and to strengthen our economy, while at the same time we address those ever-important issues of social justice.

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Speaker, in drafting this legislation we've consulted with 14 other provincial government ministries, as well as the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. We propose this bill to the House because we believe it's the right thing to do. It's the right thing to do for those people in our society who we deem to be vulnerable workers, but it's also the right thing to do for our business community. It gives us a stronger economy. Bill 18 is an essential part of ensuring that as our province grows financially and socially, it grows the right way. By acting to safeguard workers who need our protection and helping responsible, law-abiding businesses stay competitive, we're protecting the province in which we live and we're also working to strengthen our economy.

These should not be viewed as being mutually exclusive goals—and often they have been in the past. I think we're saying that these are goals that complement each other, that they're goals that can travel forward together, that the legislation should be good for business and for those businesses particularly who choose to obey

the laws, who are the good guys when we are doing the enforcement.

We need to support those companies, but we also need to recognize that as people move to our country from other countries, they're moving into areas where they may not understand that they've got certain rights they can avail themselves of. Of Ontario's many advantages, none is greater than the people who live here and the people who choose to make Ontario their home. Their talent, the skills they bring, their compassion, their competitive nature, their depth and diversity, are an unfailing commitment that we have to one another as citizens of Ontario.

We're investing in our people and we're investing in our province when we increase workplace protections, but we're also supporting that dynamic business environment that increases fairness for companies in Ontario as well, Speaker. We believe we've made progress; we believe we're going to continue to do so.

Last year, for example, Ontario was North America's top destination for foreign direct investment and our economy right here in Ontario added nearly 100,000 jobs. We want to maintain that momentum, and I believe we will maintain that momentum, but at the same time we need to work for fairness and we need to protect those in our society who are employees, who are most vulnerable.

Our legislative proposals respond to key recommendations in recent reports that most members of this House will be familiar with. They come from our stakeholders. They come from the people we meet on a daily basis. They come from the people who come here to advocate for groups in the province of Ontario. Some of the recommendations that you will find in this bill include eliminating the \$10,000 cap on the recovery of unpaid wages and increasing the period of recovery to two years for employees.

In the past, it was deemed that a cap should be in place as to the amount of money you'd be able to claim from an employer who had chosen not to pay you. We don't see any justification for that anymore. We believe that in the interest of justice, you should be able to claim what is owed to you. If someone you have worked for in a contract setting, or under any sort of workplace arrangement that you have—if somebody who has told you they will pay you for that work, we need to ensure that that work is indeed paid for.

We're going to increase the period of recovery to two years for employees as well. In the past, it was deemed that the time should lapse earlier, the time that you could actually file a claim to get those wages recovered, and I think often you would find people who would go into the process of trying to recover their wages with the best efforts, with a good-faith attitude, thinking that the employer eventually would see the error of their ways and would pay the employee. Often that doesn't happen. Often time goes by as that wait occurs. What we're doing here is increasing the amount of time that employees have to make claims against employers who haven't paid them.

We're also doing something that involves client employers and temporary help agencies. In the past, if you worked for a temporary help agency and they sent you out to work for a client employer, if the temporary help agency did not pay you, you had no claim against the place you had actually worked at. What we're proposing to do in this bill is make client employers who use temporary help agencies liable when agencies don't pay certain types of wages. What I think will happen as a result of this is that we now are actively encouraging companies to use temporary help agencies that treat their employees fairly, that are going to pay them at the end of the day.

Extending, as well, Occupational Health and Safety Act coverage to include unpaid co-op students is something that I am particularly pleased to see in this bill. We're also including other unpaid learners and unpaid trainees in this bill. In the past, when we've had co-op students in workplaces, because they haven't been covered under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Ministry of Labour's involvement in certain cases would have been limited.

What we're doing is saying that if you're part of a training program at a school, a college, a high school, and you go and get some workplace experience, the same protections that every other worker in that workplace enjoys under the Occupational Health and Safety Act should apply to you as well. As a young worker, as a learner, you should have the same rights as the people you're working along with, learning your trade, your craft, your profession or whatever you are being trained for.

In the past, Speaker, employers used to be able to recover certain costs—fees, recruitment fees—from people they were placing. We're saying that that shouldn't be allowed. What I think every member of this House would agree with, I hope, is that this bill will now make it impossible to seize personal documents, like passports, from all foreign employees, and not just live-in caregivers as it exists today. What we're proposing to do is extend the application of employment protection for foreign nationals to cover all foreign employees who come to the province of Ontario, whether by immigration or by foreign temporary employee programs.

Apart from this legislation, but certainly complementary to this legislation, our government has been in the process of boosting the number of enforcement officers in the province, and we're ensuring that more workplaces are inspected and that more employees are protected. We all know that the world of work is changing, as I said earlier. It's changing in our province, it's changing across the country and the continent, and it's changing around the globe. The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario, for example, has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to 133,000 in 2013. We believe that Ontarians would agree with us that it's proper, it's fair, it's compassionate that we protect these people, and that now is the time to act.

Nobody in this province should ever have to surrender their passport or leave their country and come to Ontario

because they are promised a job that simply doesn't exist, and perhaps get charged inappropriate recruitment fees along the way. This is why the proposed legislation that we have before the House today would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, which applies to live-in caregivers and to others, that was passed in 2009. Our government introduced that bill. It was passed in 2009, and I think that most Ontarians would agree it was the right thing to do.

What we will do is amend this act to apply to all foreign employees in Ontario who are here, as I said earlier, either through immigration or through foreign temporary employee programs. This means that foreign employees in Ontario would also be protected from illegal recruitment fees, and from having their passports or any other travel documents, or any other documents they may have, withheld by their employers. Under Bill 18, which we have before the House today, the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act would also be extended to cover approximately 110,000 additional temporary foreign employees. This same sense of justice and compassion that led to the original act now leads us to propose extending these safeguards to others who work in Ontario.

# 1400

The act, which came into force in March 2010, includes the following protections for foreign live-in caregivers, which under our proposed legislation will now routinely apply to any other foreign employee in this province. It prohibits recruiters from charging any fees at all to the caregiver, and that's directly or by any surreptitious means indirectly. It prohibits employer recovery of recruitment or placement costs from the caregiver. It prohibits reprisals against foreign live-in caregivers for exercising any one of their rights that are available to them under this act. It requires that information sheets be provided to these employees—information about the rights they have under the act. It also requires employers and recruiters who make a living from this business—and I think this is quite reasonable—to maintain records, that when they're asked to produce records, those records be available. It prohibits the employer or the recruiter from taking possessions or property, including personal documents, from the employee. It contains no monetary limit on the recovery of monies pursuant to an order of the act, and it provides a 42-month time limit on filing claims under the act as well.

Extending these protections to most foreign employees in Ontario helps ensure that these workers are treated fairly, regardless of the occupation they're in, regardless of the skill level they have. It's only fair because this act sets out minimum standards that all employers and recruiters of foreign employees who are here under an immigration or a foreign temporary employee program will now be aware of, and will now understand very, very clearly that they have to follow.

Speaker, people in the province of Ontario have a history and a tradition of working very hard. As a result of that, our province, I think, is the envy of the western



world as a place to live. When people leave other countries and decide they're going to settle somewhere else, Ontario is usually near the top of the list as a place that they would like to settle, and that's for very, very good reasons.

But they come here with an expectation that we all have—we have it for ourselves; we have it for our parents; we have it for our children and our families; we have it for each other: At the end of your shift, at the end of the day, at the end of the project, you quite simply deserve to be paid for the work you've been promised; you quite simply deserve to be paid for the work that you have done. If they are operating a business, they deserve to know that their competitor isn't undercutting them by not obeying the law or by not paying their employees.

Unfortunately, right now under the legislation as it exists today, there are both time restrictions and there are monetary limits on the claiming of unpaid wages in the province of Ontario. That simply is not right so we're making it easier for employees to get the money owed to them by making those limits much more reasonable.

What we're proposing to do is to remove the \$10,000 cap entirely under the Employment Standards Act, and that is on the recovery of unpaid wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay those wages that's being enforced. That means that employees would no longer be forced to pursue larger claims through the courts, saving both employees and businesses time and money, and doing the right thing.

If passed, our legislation would also increase the time limit for recovery of wages through an order to pay under the Employment Standards Act. It would increase that time limit to two years. We're proposing this so that older claims can be dealt with fairly, and employees at the end of the process simply get the money that they are owed.

Everyone recognizes in the province of Ontario that employees should be paid for the work they do. When they are not paid, often those employees come to the Ministry of Labour for help. However, because of changes that were introduced by another party previously, in 1966, employees can only recover up to \$10,000 through the ministry. We're saying that time has passed; that limit is unfair. In fact, what we're saying is there is no justification for a limit. If you're owed the money, you're owed the money. Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada that still has such a cap. It's important that we scrap this unnecessary and punitive measure that was introduced at a different place and time. Even employees who earn minimum wage can have claims above \$10,000 if they are also owed termination pay, or perhaps they're owed severance pay.

Vulnerable employees often cannot afford to go to court for larger claims. Court proceedings can discourage employers from settling claims quickly, and small businesses should also not have to pay a lawyer, if possible, to resolve these claims. That's why we're proposing to remove this cap.

We've been told repeatedly by advocates that many employees need the longer recovery period because

they're afraid to make a claim before they leave their jobs. They're worried that if they do so, their employer may punish them in some way, and that is simply not right.

Our proposed legislation would also require employers to provide a free Employment Standards Act information handout to all new employees, explaining their rights under the act. A translation would also have to be provided in a language requested by the employee themselves, if that is available under the many languages that we have available through the Ministry of Labour. These translations were brought into place by the Ministry of Labour to reflect the diverse workforce we have here in the province and to recognize that people come to this province perhaps speaking English well, but perhaps not; perhaps speaking English and another language; or perhaps their language skills are much more proficient in a language other than English. We have done the best we can at the Ministry of Labour to ensure that we have those laws translated into languages where they mean something.

Our proposed legislation, if passed, will better protect employees who are employed by temporary help agencies. What we're doing is we're establishing what is called a joint and several liability provision between the agencies and their clients for failure to pay certain types of wages that may be owed by the agency. This is going to help level the playing field for good employees in this province. Good employees, I think, deserve fairness, and they need protection. Client employers who use temporary help agencies would be liable for regular wages and for overtime pay if the agencies don't pay up. That simply is the right thing to do. This would help provide employees with better recourse. It would help to encourage clients to work with the more reputable temporary help agencies that we all know exist in the province of Ontario.

Our government was the first in Canada to introduce legislation specifically addressing temporary help agencies, and that was in 2009. What we did was we made sure that employees were not unfairly prevented from being hired directly at the place they were working by the agency client themselves. Often, they were prevented from doing that—or often, they weren't actively encouraged to do that. We prohibited agencies from charging fees to workers for such things as interview preparation, resumé writing and some of the other things they were charging fees for at the time that were, upon investigation, deemed to be completely inappropriate. We required those agencies to provide their employees with information about the rights that each and every one of us has, including them, under the Employment Standards Act.

Speaker, we all know that safe workplaces, when you break it right down, come down to people looking after one another. The Ministry of Labour has been undergoing the largest transformation in the last 30 years. We're creating a culture that puts health and safety at the centre of every workplace. We're the first government to appoint a Chief Prevention Officer. His job is to create a

health-and-safety/prevention focus in all of our province's workplaces. This month, we've released the proposals that were contained in a government round table that was sponsored by the Ministry of Labour to help address and to begin to deal with an issue that's very, very important to us, that being work-related traumatic mental stress. Ontario will be hosting a summit early in 2015 specifically on work-related traumatic mental stress, and we're hoping to attract some of the best and brightest minds in this field to come to the province of Ontario to ensure that Ontario is a leader in this.

1410

The Ministry of Labour conducts regular enforcement blitzes to help ensure the safety and health of working Ontarians. My ministry recently conducted enforcement blitzes to protect miners in the mining industry in Ontario.

In September, we issued a progress report—that was very well received both in southern Ontario but certainly in the mining communities in the north and specifically in Sudbury, where it was introduced—of our ongoing mining health and safety review. We didn't wait to act on that. We're conducting the review. The review is still ongoing. This was an interim progress report. My understanding is—and from talking to the participants in the group, who come from business and labour and who bring expertise to the table—that simply is something that is just invaluable.

They asked us to do certain things. They said, "Don't wait until we're finished. We've got more information for you, but here are some things you can do right now to make mines safer." What they did was they asked us if we would issue guidelines for high-visibility safety apparel for mines and mining plants.

Speaker, I went down my first mine about a month ago. I think I was about a mile underground. I think we were at the 5,000-foot level. You really get a sense for the importance of that one recommendation when you're in a mine. The only light you have is a light that's coming off your helmet. You're working in very hot conditions, you're working in very humid conditions, and you're working in very industrial conditions. Certainly, the ability to see somebody, I think, is a primary issue that the review committee was very, very quick to adopt. Just the fact that you can see somebody, just the fact that somebody is wearing reflective clothing when you're in an area or environment like that, is something that, quite simply, I think, is going to prevent injuries and save lives, starting the day it was introduced.

We're currently conducting an enforcement blitz that is going to help protect workers who are involved in material handling as well. We've also recently conducted an enforcement blitz on construction workers that involves excavation specifically, to help protect these workers as well.

Our job, and the job of everybody in this House, and certainly my role as the Minister of Labour, is to make sure that workers who go to work at the beginning of the day go home at the end of the day to their families, safe

and healthy. That's what people expect when they go to work. That's what we all expect: to see that person again, whether it be our mother, our father or any family member who goes to work. We expect to see them again at the end of the shift.

We believe the expectation of a healthy and safe workplace, though, should also apply to workers in co-op placements or other unpaid learners as well. That's why, if passed, this bill would also extend coverage of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to unpaid co-op students and to other unpaid trainees and learners, ensuring they have the same individual rights and the same protections as other workers at that workplace. That makes sense, and it's the right thing to do.

I'd like to take a few minutes to address another issue related to interns that I know has been of keen interest in recent months. The Ministry of Labour conducted an internship inspection blitz that ran from April 1 of this year to the middle of June.

Let me be clear right from the start: Unpaid internships are simply illegal in the province of Ontario. Generally, if you perform work for another person or a company or an organization, and you're not in business for yourself, you're considered, under the Employment Standards Act, to be an employee. Therefore, under the Employment Standards Act, you're entitled to the same rights as everybody else. You're entitled to minimum wage. There are some exceptions, but they're very, very limited, and the fact that you are called an intern is of no relevance to whether your internship should be paid or unpaid.

This is about the extension of the Employment Standards Act to all people in the province of Ontario. Quite simply, unless you have an exemption as a secondary school student in co-op work, or you've got a credit program, or you've got a program to give you work experience that's approved by a college of applied arts and technology or a university—if you don't have that exemption, then you need to be paid. The Employment Standards Act applies to you and you need to be paid.

During our recent enforcement blitz, our employment standards officers visited workplaces in the greater Toronto area in sectors that in the past had been known to employ a high proportion of interns. What these inspectors did specifically was, they looked for contraventions of the Employment Standards Act. What they did in particular when they went in to do the inspections was to check whether there were interns present, unpaid or not, and if so, whether those interns were availing themselves of their rights under the Employment Standards Act. If they were, then they were entitled to be paid. It was that simple.

I'll give you some examples of the sectors that we concentrated on because I've said in the past, people have said, that internships are used in certain industries much more frequently than they are in others. One was advertising, one was public relations, and computer systems design, consulting services and information services.



During the blitz, we completed a total of 56 inspections. This is what we found:

Eight of those employers simply had no internship programs; they hired employees. That's how they did their business.

Thirteen of those employers had internship positions, but they were lawfully exempt from the ESA because they were part of a school program. They were part of a college, part of a university; they were part of somebody that was involved in a learning or training experience.

Five of those employers had internship positions, and they were doing the right thing. They had interns and they were paying them. They had interns and they made sure those interns had every right available to them under the Employment Standards Act as anybody else in the province of Ontario.

Seventeen employers did not have active internship programs at the time of the inspection, but what the inspectors did in that regard was to make sure that they were given educational materials for their future reference, so that these employers, should they at some point in the future decide to revive or continue an internship program or introduce a new one, would know very specifically what the rules are governing interns in this province.

What we found was that 13 employers had internship positions and had Employment Standards Act contraventions. What we did with those 13 employers was, we issued 37 compliance orders and we told them to pay the wages. Very simply, we told them they were doing the wrong thing. As much as perhaps they thought they were doing the right thing, we told them that they were in contravention of the act. What that allowed was for close to \$50,000 to be paid to interns that should have been paid all along. The full amount has been recovered. Each one of those companies has stepped forward and done the right thing and now knows that, moving forward, this is how they have to conduct themselves.

What we found was that the most common monetary violations were for three things: minimum wage, vacation pay and not paying for public holidays. They have changed. The most common non-monetary violations were for such things as wage statements, record keeping and hours of work.

What you have in the province of Ontario now is, you have employers who thought they were doing the right thing in the past, were told they weren't and have now turned themselves around and are complying with the law. That's what we wanted.

Speaker, in order to proactively protect the rights of workers, the proposed legislation you have before you would give the Ministry of Labour the authority to require employees to conduct self-audits to determine their own compliance with the Employment Standards Act. We will go into companies. We will tell them, "Take a very careful look at what you're doing. Do an audit of yourself and report back to us and tell us whether you think you're complying with the Employment Standards Act or not." If they aren't, then certainly we will pros-

ecute if we find there are places that we need increased enforcement.

What we're trying to do is provide a tool that's going to promote compliance with the Employment Standards Act, and we're going to expand the program's reach, we think, in a very significant way, in a way that's efficient and cost-effective. It allows employers to voluntarily do the right thing. It asks them to take a long look at how they're conducting themselves, and it's asking them, at the end of the day, if they find themselves in contravention of the act, to come into compliance.

1420

Finally, Speaker, we know that all construction is a key driver of Ontario's economy. Our government recognizes this and, as a result, we're investing \$35 billion in infrastructure projects over the next three years. That's going to create and support 100,000 jobs each year. That's going to grow our communities. It's going to build our economy.

That's why we're strengthening the Labour Relations Act, the cornerstone of what I think is a fair and balanced labour relations system. What we're proposing to do here is something very, very simple but something that has been asked for and something that I think is going to really help labour relations between parties in the province of Ontario.

Quite simply, we're being asked—and we're asking the House to support this bill—to reduce the collective agreement open period in the construction industry from three months to two. What happens when the collective agreement opens up? Often, there's a desire, perhaps, to consider changing unions, to consider unionizing, to consider decertifying. A whole host of choices is available to people during that open period. What this will allow our skilled workers to spend more time doing is building the roads, the bridges, the schools and the hospitals we need to grow our economy and to ensure that a prosperous Ontario will remain prosperous for generations to come.

We're proposing to reduce that period from three months to two months. What all parties have come forward and said to us is that they think two months is adequate time to make those types of decisions, to finalize an agreement, to make a decision, and then simply to move on. They found that the three-month period simply was too disruptive, and it led to an awful lot of non-productive effort.

To further protect businesses that play by the rules and to further strengthen our economy, the Ministry of Labour is proposing to develop and share with key stakeholders an operational policy regarding enhanced use of enforcement tools, particularly with regard to those people who perhaps don't get it the first time: the repeat offenders in our system. Enforcement tools such as notices of contravention allow for higher penalties for subsequent violations. That's going to help the ministry target those unscrupulous employers that simply don't play by the rules, the way that most Ontario business does.

Speaker, I mentioned earlier in my statement that my ministry will electronically make available clear employ-

ment standards information. This information is a crucial piece of our larger enforcement strategy. Employers will be much more likely to comply with the Employment Standards Act if their employees are aware of those rights under the Employment Standards Act. As I spoke to earlier, language barriers often prevent that. What we're doing is requiring those employers to provide a translation as long as we have that translation available in the Ministry of Labour. We do have an exhaustive list of languages and dialects that we're able to do business in.

As I wrap up, the proposed Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act is about taking action to protect workers, especially the most vulnerable in our society. It's about levelling the playing field for businesses that play by the rules and have always played by the rules.

We simply want to ensure that employees in the province of Ontario are paid for the work they do, and that temporary help agency employees are provided the fairness that we get and that they deserve.

We want to ensure that foreign employees have the protections they need and deserve when they set out to make a new life in the province of Ontario.

Our government's economic plan is about creating jobs for today and for tomorrow. Along with this bill, we're investing in infrastructure, we're investing in skills training, we're investing in second careers for people, and we're moving forward with a youth jobs strategy for our younger workers.

We're also proceeding, using a very measured and a very balanced approach, to balance the budget. We're building on our knowledge economy and we're supporting small business.

The comprehensive plan and six priorities focus on Ontario's greatest strengths, but most importantly, this bill is an indication that we're also prepared to invest in our people, the people in this province. It has been said that the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members. This is an example today of how we can help further that. We can and we will help build our economy, and at the same time, we can work together to protect the most vulnerable.

Speaker, we're all one Ontario here. We stand up for each other. When people move here, they move here for a reason. It's because the province of Ontario has developed a reputation internationally that I believe, as a proud Ontarian, is second to none. By supporting this bill, and I'm asking all members of the House to support the bill at second reading, we're enhancing the reputation that the province of Ontario enjoys around the world as a people, as a society, as an economy that treats its workers the way that any one of us would want to be treated.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Barrie.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I'm very happy to rise for second reading of the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014, because this proposed legislation is about standing up for some of the most vulnerable workers in our province and providing them with the safeguards they need and they deserve.

Our proposed legislation, if passed, would establish a fair and predictable means of increasing the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation. It would take important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheck they have earned at the end of the day. It would help safeguard temporary foreign workers who have come to our province and deserve workplace fairness. It would better protect interns and other unpaid learners from dangerous work situations, and importantly, it would increase the competitiveness of businesses who obey the laws and play by the rules.

We are all aware of the growth in precarious and temporary work that has taken place not only in our province but across Canada. This includes employment where workers are in temporary jobs. I see many of them in Holland Marsh as I drive through on my way from Barrie to here. These employees may have difficulty establishing themselves financially, which has a negative impact on the economic growth of our province. It is also a key factor in poverty and near poverty. Many of the people in my riding are in this situation.

Recent reports such as the United Way and McMaster University report *It's More Than Poverty*, prepared by PEPSO, the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario research group, have helped bring attention to this problem of precarious work. We have also taken note of the *Vulnerable Workers and Precarious Work* report of the Law Commission of Ontario. That is why I am happy to be here to tell you that we are taking steps to address these issues. Our bill would help us enforce our laws and protect vulnerable workers owed money by their employers. Our bill also reflects what we have heard from Ontarians about the needs that they have due to the changing nature of work in our province, which is also occurring throughout Canada.

First, I would like to review the basic provisions of the bill and then address particular provisions of it and questions that may arise. Our proposed legislation, if passed, would amend the Employment Standards Act to remove a \$10,000 cap on recovery of wages through a Ministry of Labour order. It would increase the limit on recovery of wages from six to 12 months, to two years. It would provide added protection for temporary help agency workers. It would require employers to provide workers with a free copy of information about their employment standards rights, if they request, translated into their own language if such translation is available from the ministry. And it would enable the Ministry of Labour to require employers to complete a self-audit of their records and practices to determine compliance with the ESA.

A very important provision of this bill is that it would provide fairness and justice to temporary foreign workers and would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act (Live-in Caregivers and Others), 2009, to extend protections that currently only apply to live-in caretakers to all foreign employees who come to Ontario under an immigration or foreign temporary employee program. It would protect all foreign workers from



having an employer withhold personal documents, like a passport, and it would protect all foreign workers from being charged recruitment or other fees by a recruiter.

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Foreign workers can work in many industries. Those occupations include agricultural workers, construction workers, professionals in business services and management, musicians and singers, university professors, engineers, specialist physicians, information technology workers, teaching and research assistants, and truck drivers, as well as live-in caregivers.

The Ministry of Labour has developed an enhanced education and outreach strategy to protect temporary foreign workers, to help ensure compliance with our laws among those who employ them and to raise general awareness in this sector by placing educational materials in locations and on websites where employers have hired or intend to hire foreign workers. Foreign workers can also access fact sheets on our Ministry of Labour website, or they can call our Employment Standards Information Centre, toll-free, at 1-800-531-5551, to get information in many different languages about their rights and how to file a claim.

For those employed by temporary help agencies—and we all know that employment in this sector has increased in recent years—this proposed legislation builds on our 2009 legislation. That legislation ensures that temporary agency assignment employees aren't charged fees for things like resumé writing or taking a job with an agency client, and are not prevented from becoming permanently employed.

If passed, Bill 18 would amend the Employment Standards Act to make temporary help agencies and their clients jointly and severally liable for certain unpaid wages owing to the agency's employees. This means that clients would potentially be liable if an agency failed to pay regular wages and overtime to an agency employee who had been assigned to perform work for a client.

If passed, our bill would better protect temporary help agency workers and ensure that temporary help agencies that operate above board could better compete. It's right that we reward those who follow the law. It would also encourage employers to work with reputable agencies and hire workers directly themselves.

All workplaces in Ontario currently covered by the ESA must post a Ministry of Labour poster on Employment Standards Act rights and responsibilities. However, vulnerable employees may be reluctant to read or copy information from the poster in the workplace; I have witnessed this myself in many areas. Therefore, our bill would require that employers provide individual employees with a copy of this information, which is available from the ministry. This will significantly increase the likelihood that vulnerable employees will learn about their employment standards rights.

Our bill would also amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to extend to unpaid co-op students and other unpaid learners the same health and safety rights as paid workers. This is right and just. Even if you are a co-

op student in a university, college or other program where you are receiving educational credits, you deserve the same health and safety protections as every other worker, and that is exactly what the government is intending to ensure with this proposed amendment.

Under our bill, unpaid students, learners and trainees would be defined as workers under the OHSA, and would have the same rights and duties as the paid workers they work alongside. For example, they would also have the right to know about workplace hazards, the right to participate in joint health and safety committees and as safety representatives, and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Unpaid learners such as co-op students would also have the same duties as paid workers. For example, they would have to work in compliance with the OHSA and regulations, operate equipment safely and report any hazards or contraventions to the employer or the supervisor. These explicit obligations would enhance their accountability to the employer and to other workers.

As participants in co-operative education programs, co-op students, like all other workers, receive basic health and safety instructions, including information on the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the workplace hazardous materials information system, before entering a workplace.

The construction industry in Ontario is one of the engines of our provincial economy. We have recognized this in our government's economic plan with a historic investment in modern infrastructure, particularly in transit and transportation. Our government will spend more than \$130 billion on public infrastructure over the next decade, on new hospitals, schools, undergraduate campuses, safer roads, better public transit and all-day, two-way GO regional express rail—In Barrie, I hope, in particular—all to support sustainable economic growth across Ontario.

Is Mr. Del Duca here?

**Interjection:** He's listening.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Good. He's listening.

Reducing disruptions in the construction sector, therefore, is important for all. At least once during the life of every collective agreement, employees are guaranteed the opportunity to decide whether they wish to be represented by a union at all or to be represented by a different union than the one that currently represents them. This period is referred to as the open period.

The length of that period can result in increased uncertainty for employers, employees and unions. To achieve more stable and harmonious labour relations, it would be preferable to reduce the period of uncertainty while still retaining the ability of employees to decide. Our bill, if passed, would amend the Labour Relations Act to reduce the open period in construction industry collective agreements from three months to two months. This will reduce the period of uncertainty and the potential for disruption in this key economic sector.

Speaker, we must build and strengthen our province's economy and businesses, but we must also protect

Ontario's most vulnerable employees. I will take a few moments to describe some of the work the Ministry of Labour is currently undertaking to protect vulnerable workers, including temporary foreign workers.

In September, the ministry began a three-month employment standards blitz, focusing on vulnerable employees. Ministry of Labour employment standards officers are conducting inspections to determine compliance with the Employment Standards Act, 2000, focusing on sectors known to hire a high proportion of vulnerable or temporary foreign workers, including restaurants, building services and personal care services—for example, hair, esthetic and massage services.

Our inspectors are also focusing on business support services, such as collection agencies and call centres, and also horticulture businesses, such as nurseries and greenhouses.

Employment standards officers will check for compliance with core employment standards under the Employment Standards Act, with a particular focus on public holidays, vacation pay, minimum wage, record-keeping and payment of wages.

Our government is taking major steps to fulfill its commitment to protect vulnerable workers by enhancing proactive enforcement of the Employment Standards Act, 2000. As part of the 2013 budget, the government invested ongoing funding of \$3 million for additional employment standards officers and staff. This funding is being used to hire and train new staff and to conduct even more proactive inspections.

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The Ministry of Labour is also planning to develop and to share with key stakeholders an operational policy regarding enhanced use of the Employment Standards Act enforcement tools, particularly with regard to repeat offenders.

Minister Flynn began his second reading House statement on Bill 18 with comments on the legislative proposal to increase Ontario's minimum wage using the Ontario consumer price index, so perhaps it is fitting that I end my statement on that topic. Speaker, our government is committed to building a more prosperous Ontario while creating the jobs of today and tomorrow, and providing more opportunities for all. It is important to remember that when we came to office, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight. That was not fair to workers, who saw their cost of living increase while their wages stayed frozen. That's why our government has increased the minimum wage by 50% since 2003. Against the opposition's wishes, our government has raised the minimum wage from \$6.85 to the \$11 it is today. I constantly get thanked for this when I'm out in public.

We increased it during good times and during the depths of recession because it was the right thing to do. Everyone should be able to move forward and to remain safe and protected while doing so. Ontario went from having one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada to one of the highest, because that's what hard-working Ontario families deserve.

A look at the past 20 years shows us that decisions on increasing the minimum wage were too often ad hoc and left to the political whims of the day. That was not fair to workers, who did not know what their hourly wage would be from one year to the next, and unpredictable for businesses, who could not plan for the future. That is why our government has introduced a fair, predictable and transparent approach to setting minimum wage in the future within Bill 18. Our proposed legislation would require all future adjustments to the minimum wage to be annual and tied to the increase in Ontario's consumer price index. This would ensure that our province's minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living in a way that allows our businesses to plan for the future and continue to create jobs.

Tying our minimum wage to the change in Ontario's annual CPI was one of Ontario's Minimum Wage Advisory Panel's consensus recommendations in the report put forward by the chair of the panel. On behalf of Minister Flynn, myself and all Ontarians, I would like to thank Professor Anil Verma and the Minimum Wage Advisory Panel members for their dedication to this report and all their hard work. We will be acting on all of the panel's thorough and thoughtful recommendations. Under our proposed legislation, the first CPI adjustment would take place on October 1, 2015, and would be announced on April 1, 2015.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to speak to this piece of legislation. Of course, anything that's going to improve the health and safety of our workers out in the community and in our workplaces is something that we would stand behind very fully. I'm a little concerned, in this case, that they've taken two totally different bills, disparate bills in many cases, and they've tried to put them all into one. I'm a little concerned with how much is maybe going to get lost in the shuffle of trying to do that.

At the end of the day, I think we really deserve separate. If there's really that much concern on both of the bills, we should have taken each of the bills separately, gone through committee and really gone through with a fine-toothed comb so that we could get the best legislation out there at the end of the day.

There are a number of housekeeping items in these bills that can be cleaned up, need to be cleaned up and should be cleaned up. However, I really think we could have gone back, and I'm a little concerned we may lose some in the middle.

Minimum wage is one of the things in the middle of it that they use. It's a bit of a buzzword. Who wouldn't argue for that in many cases, particularly if you're the person at that minimum wage level wanting more? But we have to look at what the realities of that type of legislation will do to our ability to actually employ more people. Will an increase to the minimum wage actually increase employment, or will it actually have a negative impact? I think that's something we have to look at wholeheartedly.



If the Liberal government really wanted to do something to make stronger workplaces, it would have focused on what I hear most in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, in my riding—and a lot of my colleagues share the same thinking when we’re in caucus: lower energy rates. We have the highest energy rates on the continent. That’s driving people out of Ontario. It’s stopping people from coming to Ontario. And even businesses in my riding that I’m talking to about expanding certainly aren’t in that frame of mind right now, particularly because of that.

The other piece is, certainly, red tape. They’re drowning in red tape. We’ve heard it since the day I walked through these doors, and yet I haven’t seen anything happen. The Liberals, again, have been in power for 11 years. I find it very interesting that all of a sudden these types of bills come to the table and we have to do it today. Where have they been for the last 11 years? I look forward to committee and trying to find some improvements.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I listened with interest to the minister’s comments and I want to thank the government for bringing this legislation forward once again. It’s obviously incredibly important that we protect the health and safety of all workers in this province, particularly young people who are often engaged in unpaid work placements as part of their program of study.

Certainly we know that a Niagara student, a high school student, died just weeks ago in a tragic workplace accident. The Ministry of Labour couldn’t even investigate the circumstances of that young person’s death because that young person was not covered in any way by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, because he was unpaid. So there is an urgent and pressing and critical need for this legislation to move forward, and on this side of the House we are glad to support that piece of the legislation in particular.

I wanted to point out, however, that there are a couple of omissions in this legislation. The first is around students who are excluded from the Employment Standards Act. The minister referenced that there are some exclusions for students. However, those students get no workplace protections around the hours that they work, the breaks that they’re able to take, the leave that they want to take.

We also know that two co-op students—who are also excluded from the Employment Standards Act—who were doing a co-operative education placement as part of their program of study were killed within the last 10 months, while they were on that placement. There is much more work to be done to address the needs of young people who are in secondary or post-secondary education and who are doing work placements as part of their study.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It gives me great pleasure to rise in support of Bill 18 on behalf of my colleague the Minister

of Labour and the PA from Barrie. As a background in labour relations, I have a master’s in industrial relations from Queen’s, and I taught and consulted in the field for many, many years. I know how important it is in labour relations legislation to get the balance right, and I believe that what we’ve done here is exactly that: getting the balance right between employees’ rights and employers’ rights, protecting employees, not having too much red tape but getting the balance where it should be to protect vulnerable workers.

I want to focus particularly, Mr. Speaker, on the pieces here that protect foreign workers. As the PA in agriculture, I know how important it is to our colleagues who represent rural ridings where there are many foreign workers working in the agricultural sector. The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, who is here—I’m delighted to see him here; I know how important this is to him and to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. We do not want to be in a situation where vulnerable workers can have their critical documents taken from them in order to keep them from moving around the province and such. So it’s very important that we protect these vulnerable workers.

I’d also like to comment on how important these pieces about the employment minimum wage guarantee are. We can fight about what the proper level is. Economists on both sides of the House will argue that it should be this number or that number. We’ve got a fair number that we’re working from right now. Let’s not hash that debate out repeatedly. Let’s tie it to the cost-of-living indicators. Let’s make sure it keeps moving up with the cost of living so these vulnerable workers are protected.

I’d also like to talk very briefly about how this creates consistency and transparency in the legislation. It allows all classes of employees to be protected under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Employment Standards Act. Whether they’re temporary foreign workers or interns, etc., they’ll all have the same general coverage and protections. I think that’s important to the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

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**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A brief comment on Bill 18: I’d like to say that I feel the suggestion of a separate minimum wage for agricultural workers is something that may well be worth exploring. We know that the Federation of Agriculture, the Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association have all indicated that these jumps in the minimum wage do have a negative impact on their members. I certainly hear this from individual farmers as well.

I’ll quote: “The horticulture sector is still struggling to absorb the last minimum wage increase to \$10.25 an hour.” This came up in the finance committee from the fruit and vegetable growers.

OFA: “Jumps in minimum wage reduce seasonal and youth employment.” If you hike the wage, there’s fewer jobs, according to that agricultural organization.

I mentioned the Greenhouse Vegetable Growers. They also came before the finance committee, and they indicated their profitability is sensitive to changes in the minimum wage—they compete with jurisdictions with a much lower wage—and they describe this as an ill-advised way to deal with poverty.

I will say that in all three organizations there is consensus. They do lean towards linking the minimum wage to Ontario's CPI, as long as we take into consideration the general health of their business. But they made it clear at the time that they certainly did not want to see this increase to \$11 in the minimum wage.

So a separate agricultural group is something we may want to consider discussing in committee. We already have a separate classification for hunting and fishing guides, by way of example.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments for this round. I return to the Minister of Labour to respond.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to rise once again. I do want to thank the individual members who have passed comment on this bill, in particular the members from London West, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Beaches-East York and, finally, Haldimand-Norfolk.

I think everybody added a little bit to the bill. What I sensed was that, in general terms, there is overall support for either all the provisions in the bill or at least some of the provisions in the bill.

The next stage, obviously, in the preparation of a bill such as this is that it proceed to the committee stage, where we hear from the public. They will surely come and pass their comments on this and tell us what they think of the changes.

I'm asking members of this House to support it because I think—and the member from Beaches-East York mentioned it—a bill like this has to be balanced. It's got to take in the best interests and the protection of employees in this province, but it also has to take into account that we want an economy that is vibrant, growing and that is, in fact, providing jobs to those workers.

I think what we have before us in Bill 18 is a bill that has been out before those people who often express concerns or advocate on behalf of other members of our society who sometimes don't have people to advocate for them. Those members have come forward again today from the United Way and from some of the other groups that have stepped up to the plate and helped us form some policy around the indexation of minimum wage and the introduction of further employment protections to those people.

I think we would all agree, if we all took off our partisan hats, that employees in the province of Ontario deserve the protection that we want for ourselves, that we would expect for our children and that we would expect our parents should have received in the past, and perhaps didn't, even when they were immigrants, such as mine.

I'm asking the House to take a step forward today, to support this bill, to ensure it goes to committee. If it

needs to be refined along the way, we'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to all the speakers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's a pleasure to be here today to speak on Bill 18, and it's nice to see that the minister is here. I hope he remains riveted to the debate, in his seat, this afternoon, just as I was riveted over here listening to his leadoff debate and, of course, the 20-minute infomercial from the member for Barrie as well that went along with the minister's leadoff.

Minister, I'm going to start off by saying that we on this side of the House are in agreement with much that's in your bill. Much of what's in your bill can be considered housekeeping and necessary amendments to existing pieces of legislation. I do find it disappointing, though, Minister, that you've taken what were two very separate bills in the last session and put them together in this one new bill. That's fine when the bills are of a similar matter, similar substance, similar nature, but when we take policies very disparate, very irrelevant to one another and then combine them into a bill, it puts the whole House at a disadvantage to having a genuine and thoughtful debate on those aspects of the bill.

The minister just mentioned amendments in committee. I would ask the minister to truly consider removing the minimum wage bill out of this one and keeping the housekeeping aspects in one bill and the minimum wage component in a very unique and separate bill. Hopefully he'll take that under due consideration. I think it just benefits all of us here in the Legislature if we can focus our debates on relevant subjects and not have these disparate subjects all bundled up together.

First off, things like joint and several liability—that's good. I don't think anybody is going to be disappointed or would not support that. There are a number of those things that are supportive. I'm going to focus my comments more on the minimum wage aspect of this bill, with you already having the understanding that the other things we're generally in agreement on.

I'll start by saying this: Although this talk of minimum wage has a lot of interesting aspects to it, there are a lot of important considerations about minimum wage that have not been talked about. I'd like the minister to consider some of these statistics and facts about minimum wage here in Ontario. Since 2003, we are the only province in this country that has doubled the percentage of participation in our workforce that is minimum wage. We are now approaching 10% of our workforce here in Ontario that is in the minimum wage category. Most other provinces have restrained or actually diminished the number of minimum wage workers in the workforce. We have over 500,000 people now making minimum wage in the province.

That's something that this bill does not address. There hasn't been any discussion or mention about it. Why does Ontario have the greatest percentage of minimum wage workers in our workforce? Minister, I'd like you to con-



sider that. Are there things that we could do legislatively that would not necessarily just increase the minimum wage but increase the median wage of all people in this province? That's an important part here, and I'll come to this.

Raising the minimum wage, if it results in raising the cost of living, is no advantage to anybody. If there's no relative gain, then there is no benefit. That's what I'm concerned about with this bill: that there will actually not be any tangible gain for those people in the minimum wage workforce.

1500

Minister, I think you can probably—I remember that back in the 1970s, when I first started my working career when I left high school, it was commonplace back then for the industrial sector to have COLA clauses, cost-of-living increases, each and every year. Those cost-of-living increases—eventually we found out and realized that there was no benefit to them. They were actually detrimental. They continued to increase the cost of living.

Now, COLA clauses, where we had this defined increase that was going to happen each and every year, regardless of if there was any change in productivity levels, fell out of favour back in the 1980s. COLA clauses were found out and proven to be false, and here we see this government looking at repeating some of this with tying things to the cost of living. Will that also increase and begin to spiral, ensure that there is an increase in the CPI?

I also want to suggest, Minister, what do we do now, as well? And I'd like to hear a response from the Liberal side. If we go on this track where we are going to define and guarantee an increase in minimum wage costs based on CPI, is it not also, then, indicative and intuitive that we must do the same thing for OW, ODSP and others? How many others? Will we do it for the Ontario public service? Will we do it for the broader public service? Will we not run the risk of fuelling inflation by having a guaranteed increase each and every year but no increase in productivity, and therefore no relative gain whatsoever?

I would like the minister to respond to us, during this debate, as to what their considerations are for Ontario Works and ODSP, and for those other incomes derived from the public purse. Have you considered that? What is your position? Will you be implementing further items such as CPI tied to the minimum wage?

I want to just share a few statistics. I told you about Ontario having the largest percentage of minimum wage workers of any province in this country, nearly 10% of our workforce. That should give us some concerns. Let me give you some examples. Next door in Manitoba, the minimum wage is 30 cents per hour less than it is here in Ontario, but part-time workers earn six cents more on average in Manitoba than they do in Ontario, and workers who are 15 to 24 years of age in Manitoba earn, on average, 29 cents more per hour than workers in Ontario. So, even though they have a lower minimum wage, on average those part-time and youth workers are making more in Manitoba.

If we continue to go west, to Saskatchewan, the minimum wage drops down to \$10.20 per hour, but we see even further increases in youth and part-time wages in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan they have a \$1.40-per-hour increase over Ontario for the age group 15 through 24—again, a lower minimum wage, but higher average earnings for youth. Part-time workers make, on average, \$1.20 more than here in Ontario, even though—

**Interjection:** Because they are working more hours?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** No; these are hourly rates.

It's the same thing as in Alberta; Alberta has one of the lowest minimum wages in the country. Their youth wage rates are \$4 an hour more than here in Ontario. That's for youth, people aged 15 to 24. Part-time average wages in Alberta are \$3 an hour higher than in Ontario, again with a lower minimum wage rate.

The same thing happens in BC. BC's minimum wage is \$10.25; 15- to 24-year-olds in BC make, on average, \$1.08 per hour more, and part-time wages are \$1.03.

The same thing happens in Newfoundland. In Newfoundland, they have an average wage for 15- to 24-year-olds of \$1.76 per hour higher than Ontario, and the part-time wage is 60 cents higher, on average, in Newfoundland than Ontario.

If we really and truly want to look at improving those entry level workers and vulnerable workers in our workforce, increasing the minimum wage is a pretty blunt instrument, and it doesn't seem to have a very significant or tangible effect on the outcome, looking at all these other provinces and how they do things.

The only thing we really seem to be doing well in Ontario over the last 10 years is increasing the number of people who are in those entry level positions, those minimum wage positions.

Again, I see nothing in this Bill 18, Minister, even though the name of the bill is Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. I'd like the minister or somebody on the Liberal side afterwards to really address what I've just said. What are you doing to actually improve the livelihood and the prosperity of our part-time and our youth who are working increasingly more and more at minimum wage? As we see across the country, other provinces seem to be doing substantially better and actually reducing the number of people who are working in the minimum wage category and improving their opportunities for prosperity.

I can go on about this, but I think that looking at or listening to the debate about minimum wage, there have been some changes in the discussion over the years. I know that when I got out of school, or even when I was in school, minimum wage was viewed strictly as a means to support and protect those vulnerable people who were just getting into the workforce. It was never expected that people would stay at that minimum wage. It was an entry level, and they would soon move on, progress and be more prosperous. But now the discussion seems to be of the nature that we've just accepted that there will be many, many people who will stay at minimum wage, not just the youth, not just part-time, not just service,

accommodations or retail—even though they do take up, by far, the largest percentage of people making the minimum wage in Ontario. But why it is now that we've accepted or tolerated that that is the new reality in Ontario's workforce, that people must accept that your best outcome in Ontario will be a minimum wage job? I don't buy it. I don't think it's right. I think it's wrong. I think it's harmful for when we have that acceptance.

**1510**

We need to get this province increasing the workforce, not just at the minimum wage rates but at the much-improved rates, like what we've seen in these other provinces.

I can tell you that I have four children—they're all out of the house now. Three of them are working out west. The opportunities for significant improvements in income, in employment—hands down, hands down. They would have been foolish to stay here in Ontario with the opportunities that were available to them out west. They could have stayed here. It wasn't a case of not being able to get any work, just that the quality of employment was substantially diminished as to what they could find out west.

I hope those things do change down the road, and that not just my sons can find good employment in Ontario once again but that all our sons and daughters can find improved employment in Ontario. But we don't see that on the horizon and I don't see anything in Bill 18, this stronger economy act, which is going to achieve that. I do hope the minister, although he has left the chamber and he's not—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You're not allowed to make reference to the absence of any member. I would ask the member not to do that.

I return to the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Forgive me, Speaker. I inadvertently did that. I won't do it again.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Today.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Today.

There is also a great document that was done up from the Minimum Wage Advisory Panel, and it was done up for the Minister of Labour. It goes through all the statistics of the minimum wage workforce in Ontario. I look at that chart. Sometimes I'm puzzled with the report, with what it says, with how they came up with Bill 18. It says, "Minimum wage workers are disproportionately concentrated in two industries: retail trade and accommodation and food services." We know that. "In terms of age, the youth stand out as a group among minimum wage earners. Youth in the 15-19 years age group are only 4.9% of the total workforce" in Ontario, "but they form a solid 42.1% of the minimum wage workforce." That's ages 15 to 19. That probably doesn't surprise anybody, because once again, that's what minimum wage was intended for, those people who are just entering the workforce.

I would like, during this debate on Bill 18, to hear some comments from the government side about this

change of discussion, where the government has now, in my view, from what I've heard, just accepted the fact that minimum wage is no longer just for our youth. If you want to work in Ontario, expect to work at the minimum wage. We've seen that in nearly 10% of our workforce.

The country as a whole—let me just see if I can find—I know I have some numbers here. Here's a good one: Ontario had over 500,000 people at the minimum wage rate. At the same time, the total minimum wage workforce in Canada was just slightly over 800,000. Truly, a disproportionate number of people on minimum wage in this country are here in this province.

I'll be looking forward to hearing the government's responses to some of our arguments and looking forward to hearing what the government may be contemplating doing with tying other government expenditures to the CPI. Will you be doing it for Ontario Works? Will you be doing it for ODSP? Will you be doing it for anybody else? Because if we do get into this, where we have defined increases each and every year, without an improvement in productivity, history will just repeat itself. The cost of living will go up. There will be no relative gains; there will actually be relative and real declines.

I have to make one other mention. Hopefully, the minister is watching. I think that's okay to say—

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** That's borderline, Speaker—borderline.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Yes, I think it implied that the minister is not present. I'm going to ask you a second time not to make reference to the absence of any member in this chamber.

The member for Lanark has the floor.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'm sure the minister was listening intently to this debate. I wanted to share with him a story, because during this debate it was mentioned about the increase in enforcement officers by the Ministry of Labour.

I had the occasion earlier this year—I had a contractor call me up, concerned about a new enforcement officer who showed up on their job site. It ended up that, unbeknownst to me, we've hired a whole series of new enforcement officers, called personal hygiene consultants, by the Ministry of Labour.

Maybe the parliamentary assistant will be able to elaborate on these personal hygiene compliance officers that the Ministry of Labour has employed. I understand that they make \$95,000 a year—clearly not a minimum wage job. They make \$95,000 a year, and that is their official title: personal hygiene compliance officers.

**Interjection:** What do they do?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I didn't really want to ask what they do, but the title scared me. Actually, I do know what they do. I did have a significant conversation with them over their actions. I was not overly impressed, to tell you the truth, that this government has taken on the role of personal hygiene cops with the Ministry of Labour. But I'll leave that for another time.

I'll end my conversation. I see there are a lot of new members in the House today. I'm sure they're enjoying



the discussion and the debate on Bill 18. I would like to just provide some advice. There are two good books that have come out for parliamentarians, in my view, in the last year. They would be great for any parliamentarian to read, but even more so for somebody new in the business, if you want to learn about this great institution of responsible government that we have here.

1520

The first one is by Samara, and the name of that book is *Tragedy in the Commons*—a great book. The other one—it was just released a week or so ago, and I found it to be a very nice read as well—is by the member for Kelowna in the House of Commons, Brent Rathgeber. The name of that book is *Irresponsible Government*. It would be a real bonus, I think—eh?

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** He's talking about Conservatives, by the way.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** No, Brent Rathgeber is an independent member. But no, they talk about all members.

I just put that out for those new members who haven't yet fully gotten into the groove of what happens here in Parliament, in our Ontario Legislative Assembly. They might be some interesting reads and provide some insight on our activities here, and I do look forward to hearing a response.

As I said, we will be very supportive of many of these actions in Bill 18, but once again, I will say, to be fully responsible and respectful of this Parliament, I really believe that the minimum wage bill should be separated out of Bill 18 and introduced, as it was in the past, as a separate, stand-alone piece of legislation for that very important public policy on minimum wage. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I listened to the comments from the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and want to thank him for participating in the debate. He made some remarks toward the end of his speech there about the role of Ministry of Labour enforcement inspectors. I also found it interesting, when the Minister of Labour was speaking to this legislation, how he talked about the inspection efforts that had been made around unpaid interns.

The minister mentioned that there were 57 businesses that had been inspected in sort of a spot blitz to determine if Employment Standards Act violations had been taking place. The minister spoke proudly about the results of the inspection blitz. From our perspective, on this side of the House, the results are very, very troubling. You know, 42% of the firms that were inspected that involve unpaid interns in the workplace were found to be violating the Employment Standards Act. We have big concerns about whether the provisions in this act go far enough to give young people the workplace protection they really deserve.

I also want to point out a further inadequacy of the act around workers' safety and insurance coverage. There is no WSIB coverage currently for students who are doing a

work placement that is optional and that is not a required part of their program to graduate.

Clearly, there are some good provisions in this act, but there remains much work to be done to give students the safety protections they deserve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature today in support of Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. This is the first real debate that I've experienced in the Legislature. The budget debate, of course, was very important, but this has a different feel to it. It's very interesting.

I'm listening intently to the members of the opposition in their comments, and I'm very pleased to hear that, generally speaking, they're very supportive of our legislation. They see the need to modernize workplace legislation in this province, and I hope all members of this Legislature will support it.

But I've heard some interesting, unusual comments. I've heard that perhaps we should lower the minimum wage in certain sectors. I've heard that this is going to lead to inflation if it's unchecked. I know that the minister could share with the Legislature that built into the legislation is a review mechanism: that after five years' time there will be a review of the minimum wage increase components of this legislation to see what effect it has on the labour markets, on inflation. So that is built into it.

But to hear members of the opposition link the oil sector in Alberta and the \$25-an-hour jobs at Tim Hortons and somehow say that's relevant to our discussion in Ontario about having reasonable, fair increases to minimum wage so the standard of living for young people, for single moms, for the people who are in the retail sector—that's not really an apples-and-oranges debate. I hope they'll come back to the fruit market with some better—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act.

To my colleague from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington: I think he brought out a lot of good, valid points here. I think again we generally are supportive of anything in legislation that's going to actually improve the health and safety of workers in our great province of Ontario. I think he also, though, raised good issues out there, those being that there were two bills here that were bundled into one, and our concern is going to be, do things get lost in there? Is it too much to try to do? If we really wanted to make differences, we could have taken each of these bills and done them in a detailed manner to ensure that we're truly getting the best legislation.

In a small, rural place like Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, what I hear from a lot of the single mom-and-pop shops that are the bulk of the employers in small, rural communities, particularly with regard to the minimum wage, is that it may make a difference whether that store—a

convenience store, a small market—stays open for extended hours in the evening or late hours on the weekends, when a lot of our tourists are up. And can they truly afford that? Is it actually going to be a case of whether they employ more people or are they actually going to employ less people? Are they going to have to pick up the slack and work more in advance of the 70 to 80 hours they work now? And, again, is that service going to be there? If that service isn't there, not as many people are coming to shop in those small communities, which, again, is a downward negative spiral. I think it's something we really have to look at, to see whether there truly is a balance at the end of the day by increasing.

We've had some of my other colleagues talking about the fruit growers, who have said—and I'll talk later today in my comments about one in my riding who has actually given a very good case, I think, for the concerns he has in regard to the fruit growers and increased minimum wages there. I think we need to ensure that anything we're doing is going to actually end in the result being that there is better employment.

The other concern I have is, are kids entering the workforce going to get that very viable job experience, that very first opportunity to get out in the workforce and truly learn what work is? I'm concerned that some of these changes may do that. Generally, overall, I'm in favour of anything that's going to improve. I look forward to getting to committee and seeing it in the detail there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I enjoyed listening to my friend from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, especially when he was talking about the books that he's been reading lately. There was a book I almost bought. As you know, I was at Caesars with many of you last weekend when you were down for your Liberal council and there was a book there by a guy—Greg Sorbara, I think it was. I was going to buy it but I said, "I'll have my fun and have him sign it for me." So I said to the guy, "When is Sorbara going to be here to sign the book?" He said, "In a couple of minutes." I said, "Okay, I'll wait." So I waited and I waited. I said, "When is he coming?" "Oh, he's just around the corner. He'll be here any minute." I waited and I waited. Finally, I said, "Is he going to be here or not?" "He's coming; he's coming."

I just thought, okay, another broken Liberal promise; right? I really wanted to read the book. I wanted to find out what you guys have been doing.

1530

**Interjection:** Can you give a report?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It was a good book.

We lose a lot of our young people to the west because that's where the jobs are at the moment. Years ago, people from all over the world came to Windsor to work in the car plants, to work in the mines. We benefited from that. Now somebody else has a turn.

We're doing our part. My son's wife delivered a grandson on Friday night, Saturday morning. Let me take

this opportunity—my first grandson, Fletcher Andrewson Kristopher Hatfield. At some point I'd like to bring him to the members' gallery and introduce him to you all. That may take a couple months or a couple years—I don't know—but we'll get him here. I hope he can find a job in Ontario and make much more than minimum wage, because all young people in this province deserve an opportunity to advance themselves and to move on to greater heights.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you. That's on my to-pick-up list as well, Sorbara's book.

Listen, I want to thank the members from London West, Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and Windsor—Tecumseh. The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore mentioned comparing with the oil patch. Well, Manitoba is not quite the oil patch. Saskatchewan, Alberta—yes. BC is not quite the oil patch. Have they got some? Yes, absolutely. Even Newfoundland, they've got oil. But I think what that tells us is that some provinces are utilizing their resources in a much more effective manner than we are in this province.

We have no shortage of natural resources in this province. We talk about the Ring of Fire, but that's all it is—talk—because there's no jobs there. We have an abundance of forestry. We have an unlimited amount of pristine and beautiful lakes and rivers and lands in this province, but we don't seem to be utilizing our resources. That's one thing for the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

I will just also mention the review. Absolutely, review is a good thing. However, if we wanted to be a truly responsible and open, transparent government—in this act, the review is only by the minister, not by this assembly. Let's change that aspect and have this act reviewed by this assembly every five years and not just by the minister, because as we've seen in the estimates committee, sometimes it's hard to get stuff out of the minister at any committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** As always, it is an honour to rise in the House and to join the debate. I'm particularly pleased to resume what was debate on the previous incarnation of the bill, Bill 146, from the spring prior to the election. I'm once again pleased to speak on behalf of our caucus as our labour critic.

Listening intently to all ideas and opinions throughout this debate today, this afternoon, I was just reminded why this place is so special by my colleague the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, because right at the end of his two-minute hit, his closing remarks, he gave me a nugget that I think we should all hold on to here.

I disagreed with, I guess, 99% of what he said prior to that, but in regard to reviewing the minimum wage on a



five-year basis, he's right. We should review the minimum wage in this chamber with all elected members on maybe a more condensed time frame. I am thankful to you for bringing that point forward. It reminds me why this is such a great job and it's such a great honour to represent and honour to speak to the bills, because all ideas can be put forward and shared and, hopefully, absorbed by the government of the day and implemented.

As I said, Bill 18 was previously introduced as Bill 146, and we as New Democrats are generally supportive of the measures. We see them as small steps moving forward.

Speaker, if I might interject, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I forgot to mention that.

As I said, we are supportive of some of the measures. I'll go through them for the pleasure of my colleagues in the House, who I think would like to be reminded of how intricate this bill is.

Number one is the extended damages provision. The bill replaces the current six-month cap on back wages in section 111 with a two-year limit while also removing the \$10,000 cap on damages for unpaid wages. These changes will allow workers to recover a greater proportion of their actual lost wages when employers have violated the Employment Standards Act over an extended period of time.

I see this as coming not a moment too soon—or too late, depending on where you're at—because, of course, why would we limit wages to be recovered by an employee from an employer who is unscrupulous and is fighting that employee every step of the way? Let's ensure that if someone is owed more than \$10,000, they are afforded the ability to pursue those back wages to that full extent. Of course, extending the period of time in which they can go after that money as well will be a welcome addition to that.

Secondly, the new temp agency record keeping and joint and several liability for temp agency workers is an interesting component of the overall bill. I think what it attempts to do, as we've heard throughout the debate, is address some of the gaps that exist in who is liable when there is a transaction—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, I am supposed to talk for an hour. Thank you. I see the 56 minutes left.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Don't feel compelled.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No, I will feel compelled. It's the first day. You guys can't get out of here too early.

Speaker, back to temp agency record keeping: As I said, there's a gap that exists in terms of who is responsible when a temporary worker is contracted by an employer through a temp agency. The gap exists in terms of who enforces the Employment Standards Act, who is responsible for training, who is responsible for benefits, who is responsible for all the measures and compliance under the Employment Standards Act. What this does is compel those two entities to both be responsible. So no longer will there be any ambiguity as to who is respon-

sible when someone is contracted through a temporary agency.

I think it speaks to the larger problem, however, that the explosion of temp agencies has become the norm for labour market supply in the province of Ontario. It was alluded to by our colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, in terms of why do we have these temp jobs, low-wage-paying jobs, precarious work; why is it that we see such prominence of this in the province of Ontario?

I would say, and I would submit and argue, that it is primarily because of Conservative and Liberal policy at both the federal and provincial levels for at least a decade, and that has welcomed that type of employment, that sector of employment that typically provides no real net benefit in terms of what a manufacturing base would have done. These are more typically service-based jobs—not to say they are not important, but they are always less valued or devalued on the market in terms of labour supply.

When we use free trade agreements that outsource and allow cheap imports to flood our markets, there is no longer a demand for a resource-based economy, in the province of Ontario, where we establish higher levels of employment for turning our resources into products—value-added employment. That doesn't exist when you're flooding neighbourhoods and communities with call centres and fast-food agencies and Walmarts. Speaker, it is Walmartization, if that is a word—I believe it actually may be somewhere in the lexicon. That's what Liberal and Conservative policy has done. It has relied heavily on Walmart cheap labour, cheap-wage jobs to fuel our economy; you don't have a manufacturing policy in the province of Ontario, nor do we have one at the federal level—

*Interjection.*

1540

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No, you don't. You don't have a strategy. You don't have a national or provincial food strategy, where we would implement domestic production policies through the province, and also through the feds. These are things that you have abdicated in terms of your responsibility to build a larger, more value-added economy.

I digress, Speaker. That's what I think about temp agencies and that's why I think there are so many of them, because you've stood idle as they've come into our communities and they become the go-to for cheap labour—all the more reason to applaud you taking some steps forward in closing those gaps.

The third provision is the new information disclosure requirement: posters and self-audits. It requires distribution of the employment standards poster to every employee and adds another tool: the employer self-audit. I have some questions about this, some serious questions. The self-audit is an interesting wrinkle. It gives the employment standards branch the power to order an employer to conduct a self-audit of its records to determine if it is in compliance with the act or regulations. The

employer must conduct the audit and report its findings to the employment standards office.

Speaker, I will tell you that if my grade school, my high school and my university professors allowed me the opportunity to fill in my own report card, I would stand before you today as a straight-A student. It would have been impeccable and so would my attendance. I would have been perfect, but unfortunately that wasn't the case. There were some areas in schooling that I did not succeed in and did not excel in. You can go back and check my report card.

I'm concerned that this is the tool that the government is giving to employers: "Conduct your own self-audit, tell us how great you are, tell us how you are in compliance with the Employment Standards Act, and everything will be all right." I'm interested to hear what the specifics are within that provision of the bill.

As you heard from my colleague the member from London West, who brought forward her own bill—she tabled Bill 22, the protection for interns and vulnerable workers act, one that I hope my colleagues across the way on the government side take the time to read, because it does go a lot further in terms of protecting the most vulnerable in Ontario. But as you heard her mention, she took the government's own numbers and those straight from the minister's comments today that the recent blitz that was conducted resulted in 56 inspections. They found 31 companies with interns who weren't a part of an educational program or a co-operative program, 13 of them breaking the law, which extrapolated means that 42% of those 56 inspections resulted in a violation of the Employment Standards Act. That's astounding, Speaker, and it begs the government to do more on the enforcement side.

We heard that a figure of \$3 million annually will be put forward to augment some enforcement provisions, but it's not nearly enough. It's not nearly enough when it comes to the Employment Standards Act, and it certainly is not nearly enough when it comes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act; I'll get to that. I do believe that the provisions in this bill that touch on health and safety might very well be the most important from the perspective of working people in this province.

Number four, Speaker: The bill introduces new protections for foreign nationals working in Ontario, and, by extending protections for live-in caregivers in the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act to other foreign nationals working or looking for work in Ontario, such as temporary foreign workers, it replicates what currently exists for live-in caregivers, provisions that protect them similarly as if they were long-time employees or long-time residents of Ontario. That is good, fair and just, and we applaud that. However, there are some gaps that exist that we wonder on this side of the bench if the government couldn't bring forward—particularly the gap in terms of the three-month wait time for temporary foreign workers or foreign nationals who come here seeking employment, and who are then employed and retained by a company, to immediately begin to receive Ontario OHIP benefits.

I submit that there is no better time to examine this provision than right now, given the considerations of the Ebola epidemic that we see, where industrialized nations such as Canada, who have progressive health care systems and good health care systems, should play a role in ensuring that for anyone who comes here who isn't receiving or who hasn't received proper health care services in their home country, we can then play a role in ensuring that they get proper health care.

We've seen, just recently, 300 cases of tuberculosis. On March 2, 2011, 300 foreign nationals arrived in Canada with diagnosed cases of tuberculosis. We can play a role in stopping epidemics like Ebola and tuberculosis simply by expanding and extending our health care system to those people who come here. I think it's really a measure of humanity that the government has the ability to do.

Under that provision—number 4 on my list, at least; I don't know if the government has labelled it as such—it does speak about the banning of recruitment fees. Specifically, I believe, it is targeted among the migrant worker population in Ontario.

If you can imagine the prospect of leaving your home country, leaving your family, for a job that has been presented to you at a certain wage and benefits, being sold a bill of goods and arriving there—putting your life on hold in your home country and coming to a foreign country, having to leverage everything you have, borrowing from unscrupulous lenders just to be able to get that job, and having your citizenship documents held in order to secure that employment—unbelievable.

I commend the minister and the government for addressing this issue. It's one that I think can send a clear message to other jurisdictions that people deserve to be treated fairly, that no matter where you come from, this place, Ontario, is a safe place, one that values fairness, one that values protection and the work that each and every one of us does—no matter where you're from—to provide for our families and to make our province a better place. With that, it requires some responsibility from the government to ensure that those rules are enforced. I do salute, certainly, this provision of the bill.

Advocates are calling for some measures of strengthening. Of course, New Democrats are anxious to hear testimony at committee, if this bill is indeed passed and does end up in committee. Some of those advocates are calling for the strengthening of Bill 18 to give the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration the power to create registries for employers and recruiters. Let's know who is bringing in foreign nationals, who is bringing in temporary foreign workers or migrant workers. Let's understand where they are so that we can assist them in learning about these laws.

I mean, my goodness, if we are to enact provisions of security and provisions of protection for migrant workers, let's know where they are, and let's ensure that our employment standards officials and our labour officials know how to access them and to give them the information that they need to be safe and to be treated fairly.



They're also calling on recruiters to be required to put forward mandatory financial security in the form of a bond, an irrevocable letter of credit, or a deposit before being licensed, and that recruiters and employers are jointly and severally liable for any and all exploitative recruitment practices in Canada and abroad.

That would make sense, considering that you're applying that same mandate to temporary work agencies that are based in Ontario. In essence, recruiters who are bringing in temporary foreign workers are doing the same job. Let's extend that same joint and several liability to those folks as well. I hope this is something that the government considers.

1550

Also, another provision that the government might want to consider is that employers be prohibited from charging any fees to migrant workers, and that the onus of fee non-payment be on the recruiter, not the migrant worker; that the time limit on complaints be at least five years so that workers can seek justice after their contract finishes; also, that all migrant workers coming into Ontario have full access to full immigration status, access to social benefits, protections from reprisal and meaningful labour protections. Speaker, that would certainly go a long way in terms of levelling the playing field—access to justice, access to fairness for migrant workers who toil in our province every day—but, as we are here and as we speak, they are not protected the same way that other workers are in the province. I think it is a shame.

That was number four. Number five of this bill, Bill 18—I'll just take a little sip of water and wet my whistle. That's good. Thank you, Speaker. I forgot how great the water was in here. Could you imagine that? It's wonderful.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Public services.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Public water, public service water. It's very good.

Speaker, number five: It changes the definition of "worker" in the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include people who are performing work for no pay, such as unpaid trainees, commonly called unpaid interns. This closes a loophole in the Occupational Health and Safety Act that protected only workers who are paid. This change is an obvious one to make since there's no reason why unpaid workers should not be covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but it certainly won't spark any great revolution in the treatment of unpaid workers.

That's how we feel, Speaker. We only have to look at the tragic deaths of two co-operative students in the last year, while they were on their co-ops. In early October, 17-year-old Adam Keunen, a Niagara-area student—17 years old—died in the first week of his co-op at an auto-recycling facility. Minister of Labour, I implore you: If you do nothing else, if no other provisions of this bill pass and there's no other movement within the extension of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, ensure that our unpaid interns, our educational interns, learn it, that they go through the steps of learning the Occupational

Health and Safety Act. That's the most important thing. I can tell you—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I thank my colleagues from both sides.

If they go through a co-op for eight weeks, 12 weeks or 14 weeks, I don't care what they learn as long as they learn how to be safe at work, as long as they learn their protections at work: the right to refuse, the right to participate, the right to know. Those valuable principles are the most important things they need to learn early on in their careers. I believe that this goes a long way, but let's make sure that we put the resources behind it so that it is common knowledge; you don't step into a co-op without at least knowing your rights and you are fully trained and fully protected. That's absolutely something that I hope is championed through this bill. You have my full support on that. We can avoid any other young person being harmed, certainly. So I welcome that provision and I thank the government for putting that in here.

Number six doesn't really belong in terms of the theme of the bill—the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act—but I understand the need for it, and I don't necessarily disagree with it being in here. It reduces the open period for decertification in unions, which are called "raids" in the construction industry, from three months to two months at the end of a collective agreement. I understand what this means; I understand what it does. It eliminates confusion on worksites. I can tell you that as a trade unionist and as someone who has been involved in organizing workplaces and involved in certifying workplaces, you know when that open period is and you've prepared for that open period months and years in advance. If you can't get the job done in two months, then you probably don't deserve to represent those workers.

I think it will aid in some stability in those workplaces. I think it's welcomed on both the labour-union side and the employer side. I don't see it as being anything that isn't reasonable. I certainly will look forward to hearing from my friends in the trade union movement who will have a new reality to deal with, and we'll see how they make do with it.

Number seven amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to clarify responsibilities for workers who are injured during a job placement arranged by a temporary health agency by attributing the cost to the employer where the injury occurs and assessing wages by reference to income earned from the agency. Again, a welcome baby step forward, something that I believe clarifies and closes a gap that only exists because of the enormous prevalence and exponential growth of temporary work agencies that have flooded our labour market here. We welcome that, but you've got a bigger problem on your hands, members of the government. It is within the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

You have injured workers out there who have been failed by successive governments, who are losing hope,

who are injured and who are being run through a system that is not functioning in the way in which it was designed and has been subsequently designed to fail those injured workers. You have a massive problem on your hands, one that I don't think you've grasped and one that leaves many people behind, eliminates their hope and then pushes them onto our social assistance rolls, where a program that was not and is not designed to support them is the support of last resort, for lack of a better term.

Your system, in terms of the WSIB, is broken. The steps that you've made will only compound the problem. Again, I implore this government to take tangible steps to ensure that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, or, as it was previously known, the workplace compensation bureau, compensates injured workers fully, fairly and adequately for the injuries that they receive while at work through no fault of their own. It's a massive gap within our labour system here in this province that is not being addressed.

My goodness, I know we're four years out until the next opportunity, but I can't wait. I would love that opportunity, as the Minister of Labour, to fix that issue.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** You'll get your chance.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'll get my chance. Thank you. I feel that and I will work towards that. You have my word on it.

The fifth provision within Bill 18 is that it indexes the minimum wage. Currently the minimum wage is set out in a regulation made under the act. The act is amended to provide that each year the minimum wage is adjusted according to the consumer price index, the CPI.

Kudos; well done; congratulations. You have finally acknowledged that the minimum wage in this province of Ontario has to go up, that people are falling behind, that the gap, which is commonly known as income inequality, that gap between the rich and the rest of us, is widening and it's creating a massive problem. It's being acknowledged even in the United States as one of their most pressing problems. The Obama administration regularly acknowledges income inequality as being one of the drivers of a stalling economy.

So thanks for coming to the table finally here, after New Democrats have pressed hard and fought for some indication or inclination from this government and others to address that issue. I can tell you that I remember being out there and thinking, "Man, this \$7.25 an hour is really not getting me any further ahead." That's when New Democrats proposed a \$10 minimum wage in 2006—in 2006, \$10 an hour. Imagine, had you understood at the time that that gap was increasing, and had we had even an annual raise afterwards according to the consumer price index, people would be far better off, I submit.

**1600**

So you're playing catch-up is what I'm saying, and not in the Leamington tomato sense, Speaker. You're playing catch-up in the sense that even today, in today's dollars, \$11 an hour isn't going to get you very far.

I heard again one of the things I totally disagree with from my friend the member from Lanark—Frontenac—

Lennox and Addington: I believe he said that we really shouldn't even have a minimum wage. I'm reminded of the words of Chris Rock, the famous American comedian—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** He's quoting Chris Rock.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm quoting Chris Rock. He said minimum wage—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'll watch my language. He said we have minimum wage because if they could pay you less, they would. If it was legal to pay you less, they absolutely would.

Speaker, we need to close that gap in a whole host of ways: the employment standards, the enforcement of employment standards, the information provided to workers, particularly vulnerable workers, the expansion of the ability for people to certify as unionized, organized. That's another reason. If you look at statistical data, when you see an annual decrease in terms of median income, you see parallel numbers in terms of decreasing rates of unionization, particularly in the private sector. Those correlations cannot be ignored; I guess they are being ignored. If you're not going to fill the gap, which governments of the day for more than decade have proven not to be able to, then at least allow workers to organize and to be represented by trade unions that are going to fill that gap and protect them at work and negotiate good wages and benefits. Let's make sure we do that. Outsource your responsibility to the trade union movement. They can do that. They've been playing that role and actually helping the economy for quite some time.

I don't think you will go that far. I don't think we will see anti-scab legislation ever come out of this government, and I don't think we will see card-based certification come out of this Liberal government. Prove me wrong, please. By all means, do it. Do it.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** We did it last year.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No, you never did it.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** In construction.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, okay. Well, one pony for one kid at birthday time isn't really all the fairness in the world.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** What about the other kids?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** What about the other kids? One component of our economy—and believe me, those workers definitely benefit from card-based certification; I'm one of them. But we can do more. We can extend that so that it is easier for workers to be represented and it is easier for them to negotiate a higher wage. Maybe in the utopian society of the member from Lanark, we won't need a minimum wage because we will have folks who are represented in the workplace. They'll be safe, they'll be prosperous, and they'll be valued and protected.

Speaker, I think I feel good about what I've said here today, and I think the government has a sense of where we're coming from on this bill. We do look forward to seeing it go to committee, and I do look forward to



hearing from stakeholders in terms of their perspective. I do hope that it passes swiftly, because it's high time that we do protect those vulnerable workers in the province.

I cede my time to my colleague the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Does the member for Kitchener–Waterloo wish to speak?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sorry; it's the first day back.

But it is always a pleasure to get up and talk about a piece of legislation which has some potential to actually make the lives of people in the province better and workers safer. It was referenced that this piece of legislation died on the order paper with the election, but there was an earlier version, an early variation of this piece of legislation actually that died on the order paper as well when the former Premier of this province prorogued Parliament—over a hundred pieces of legislation died as well then.

We've seen this several times, and there are some themes that are recurring, but every time a piece of legislation like Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act comes before us it does provide an opportunity for us to make the legislation stronger. As my colleague pointed out, there are some things that are actually good in this legislation, and I think I'm going to start with that.

The issue of banning recruitment fees, for instance, has been a long-standing issue in the province of Ontario. Migrant workers, women in particular, have been asked to pay unscrupulous recruiters tens of thousands of dollars to gain access to Ontario, to gain access to employment opportunities, which, in turn, turn out to be something other than what they were promised to be.

The problem with a recruiter going to a foreign country, for instance, and saying, "For \$10,000 you can access this country and this province," is that it gives that job opportunity the illusion of being a credible job opportunity. We've actually just seen this recently in the news last week. There was a horrific death, the murder of a woman who came into this province as a nanny and was also, of course, being recruited into the sex trade field. I have to tell you, this is one of those issues that is subversive and undermines the very principles and values that we have, I think, as a province and as a country, and yet it has been going on for quite some time.

What Bill 18, I think, proposes to do is to ban the recruitment fees and thereby, perhaps and hopefully, end the illusion that if you're paying a huge amount of money to get into this province to access an employment opportunity, it's a credible and legitimate and legal opportunity when the evidence actually proves otherwise.

In the same vein, around recruitment fees and around the power that a recruiter has over a temporary worker, a migrant worker, there is the issue, also, of them withholding citizenship papers, undermining their rights. This is really an emerging trend in the country and in the prov-

ince. We saw it at the national level with the temporary worker program when the Harper government created this huge loophole where large corporations could pull in very vulnerable people and have them work at corporations like McDonald's, for instance; this was very recent, in the spring. We were horrified, as citizens of Ontario and as citizens of this country, to see that primarily these were young women who were being housed in local motels, who were working extremely long hours, who were not aware of their own rights as employees in the province of Ontario, as temporary citizens even. Also, they were pushing out long-standing employees of those corporations. The federal government has made some progress on that file, but I think that the two issues are very much connected.

What advocates have been saying on the recruitment fees is—they have asked for the strengthening of Bill 18 as follows: They've asked that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration have the power to create registries for employers and recruiters. For us as legislators, as this legislation moves forward, we need to know where those people are, so there needs to be a registry. You have to understand the problem at hand in order to address the risk or to mitigate the risk or to protect those workers. This is something that we're going to be looking at very closely. Obviously very connected to that is that all migrant workers who come to Ontario must have access to full immigration status, social benefits, protections from reprisals and meaningful labour protections.

We have all come from outside of Canada, except for our First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. We all have a history of being immigrants to this country. In the past, though, when we came to the country we had the potential, the opportunity, to be full-fledged, respected citizens with all the rights that ensued. Disturbingly enough, the trend has been to essentially use people and then dispose of them. This is something that we have to be cognizant of. We have to acknowledge that it's a problem, and we have to be cognizant of the fact that in order to prevent this from happening, you need strong oversight. Oversight, and the lack of oversight, has been a long-standing issue with the Ministry of Labour in this province. I cite the safety inconsistencies, for instance.

**1610**

For those of you who heard the petition read into the Hansard today, we on this side of the House, in this corner, have been fighting for better training for working at heights. This is long-standing. This stems from the Dean report of 2010, which determined that the safety regulations, the training, the oversight, the standards in this province were not up to a standard which was acceptable. There were almost 38 recommendations that came from that Dean report. Eleven of them were priorities. One of them specifically called for a mandated working-at-heights training standard. To date, that standard is not in place in the province of Ontario, which is ironic, because the government talks about building Ontario up, and actually Ontario is building up. We actually are intensifying, so we have more skyscrapers and more

cranes across this province than we have ever had, so the need to train workers who are working at heights has never been more important.

In fact, I just published a local op-ed piece on this very issue. If you're not going to do it for the right reason, then do it because it makes financial sense. I costed out falls in the province of Ontario, the 800-or-so serious falls, and I costed out the cost of a claim to WSIB, and then countered that with the cost of actually putting in a training program which would prevent people from being injured in the workplace. This is not really rocket science at all; it's just common sense—and I hesitate to use that word, for other obvious connotations. But it makes not only a compassionate case for bringing in the working-at-heights training program, but there is a strong financial case, a strong economic case, if you will.

You can connect it to productivity or what have you. For me, it's a little more personal, though, because a young man who was 23 years old fell to his death in my riding on October 10, just over a year ago. His name was Nick Lalonde. He had only been working on that site for five days, and he was a temporary contract worker. There was no workplace safety committee. There was no training. There were no posters. Posters have some purpose, I guess, and I think that Bill 18 calls for that. He went up to the 12th storey. He was not harnessed in, and he fell to his death. He left a child and a mother and a father and a whole community that, seriously, could not understand how this young man got to be in that position without being appropriately trained. This is after 18 workers died last year in the province of Ontario. They fell to their deaths.

What Bill 18 has the capacity to do, and what we are charged with, I think, in this House, is ensuring that the legislation meets the emerging and current needs of workers in the province of Ontario.

Certainly, as we look at the growing temp agencies that have, unfortunately, filled a huge gap in this province—in my mind, because of the lack of a cohesive employment/jobs strategy for the province of Ontario—because that has happened, we have more temporary workers working in agencies who are without the power to be strong advocates for themselves.

I think that Minister Flynn was actually recently in—the Brantford Expositor reported that he was in Brantford. It's interesting to know that in Brantford, the average for use of temporary workers is between 21% and 22%. So almost a quarter of the workers in Brantford look to a temp agency as the primary place of work, whereas the provincial average is 18%.

So it's good that he went to Brantford; it's good that he sat down. The headline, though, reads, "Minister Gets Earful on Temp Agencies." This had to do with the consultation on G18.

This is what the people who are on the front lines said to the minister at the time. They said that they want transparency provisions so that workers could check a temp agency, its record, and whether there are violations of the Employment Standards Act.

They want transparency in advertising. All of us in this House have examples of advertising which is misleading to workers, promising a certain rate, promising certain hours, promising certain conditions, sometimes benefits and perks, which turn out to be lies.

This is what the front-line people have said to Minister Flynn—and, actually, the Speaker was also there that day. They want agencies to be required to get employees safety training. They do. Because they recognize that when these individuals actually are hurt in the workplace, they have no recourse, because they have no rights.

They want stronger language to protect a worker's right to refuse unsafe work, without the fear of reprisals. There is a huge power imbalance when you have a person who is—and I want to point out that a large number of these workers are women. They are marginalized citizens in the province of Ontario. They are new immigrants; they're people without a high level of post-secondary education or education at all. Really, those who live on the margins are forced to work on the margins in the province of Ontario.

In this consultation with the Minister of Labour they pointed out these weaknesses in the legislation as it's presented right now. There's obviously room for improvement. The minister at the time, based on this article, said that the increase in temporary help agencies is "a moving target." Actually, I do agree with him on that. It is a moving target because there's no true oversight over temp agencies. There's an opportunity to strengthen so that they can't come into one area and then leave really quickly, abandoning their responsibilities as an employer. He acknowledges that we need to have rules and laws in place to deal with that.

An interesting piece, though, which I find not overly surprising, is that during this same round table with the minister and the Speaker on Bill 18, Garry MacDonald of the Brantford and District Labour Council noted that 72% of agencies had Employment Standards Act violations. That's 72%.

In Brantford, for instance, you have 22% of the population working for temp agencies, and 72% of those agencies have violations against them, around safety. So this is—it's hard to actually find the words for it because Brantford, obviously, is a microcosm of what is happening in other jurisdictions, but it tells a very important story. It tells why the legislation is so important. It tells us that oversight has not been a priority for this Liberal government for 12 years now.

Earlier, the Minister of Labour referenced the importance of hiring a Chief Prevention Officer. Well, I'd like to remind this House that this is the second Chief Prevention Officer that has been in this important role. The last one left. He just threw his hands up in the air. He said that if this government is not going to follow through on training-at-heights standards—that's a benchmark. It's a low-watermark level. This is basic common sense, that you train people when they are working in risky situations. He just left.

We have a new Chief Prevention Officer, and we are still waiting, for four years. I'm told it's coming, though.



I have to tell you, all politics aside, if the regulation comes in through this Legislature, through Bill 18 or otherwise, around ensuring and mandating training for working at heights workplace safety, I will be the first person to stand up in this House and say, "Congratulations." Let's just make sure it's strong; let's make sure it's good. Let's keep the workers in this province safe.

I totally agree with my colleague from Windsor-Essex. The opportunity for those paid internships and those co-op programs—the value of them is not only for skills acquisition. It's also so that those young people who are having those experiential learning opportunities—and we know that students are hungry for those opportunities and we know that sometimes liability and litigation prevents those opportunities from happening. But why not build in some safeguards to ensure that when students go to a workplace, they know what their rights are, they know that they can refuse unsafe work, and they know that they will be protected through legislation if they stand up for themselves in that workplace?

1620

The work that's before us, it's a huge amount. You've really got a lot in this piece of legislation, which I find interesting. I know that there is a push to get some things done very quickly, but our interest is also to get those things done quickly and well so that there aren't unintended consequences and so that the intent of the legislation actually is realized.

Bill 18 also addresses curbing wage theft, and now this has come up in the House several times. In particular of course, we always talk about the tip-out bill which was brought forward by the former member of Beaches—East York, I think maybe three or four times, and now has been brought forward by the new member for Beaches—East York. There has to be some control for employers to not essentially steal from their employees. I think of the good people who serve us downstairs in the parliamentary restaurant, In Camera. I've asked them, Jenny and Candy and Richard—and of course Joseph is no longer there. We used to talk about the fact that they pool their tips as a collective. That's very, very different than the employer taking those and distributing what he feels those employees should be garnered. There are ways to protect workers who depend on those gratuities, quite honestly. The minimum wage will obviously strengthen some of that temporary, part-time, precarious work.

What we are seeing, actually, more and more in the province of Ontario is something called involuntary part-time work. We are seeing people who really do want to work more than 15 hours a week, but their employer is sort of capping and spreading it around a lot of people so that they don't have to add to the benefits or whatever other secondary costs those employees bring to the table.

We, of course, support a strong minimum wage. We did call for the increase to \$12. We did also cost it and tie it to the cost of living, and then we also built in some supports for businesses so that they could transition to that place for Ontario's workers. But in the work that's before us with Bill 18, there are some basic places that

need direct attention, and there are some places where we can strengthen this piece of legislation. I look forward to it getting to committee so that those conversations can be open and transparent for everyone in the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It does give me great pleasure to respond to the comments made by the member for Essex and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I particularly want to congratulate the member from Essex for the gift that he received from the honourable member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. You mentioned earlier about receiving a nugget, such a rare gem, from the member, and I wish the member were here right now where he could actually give you the gem—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would warn the member we don't speak about people who are not in the Legislature.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Oh, I'm sorry. I heard the other member do it, and I completely forgot. That's right; my apologies.

What I would like to say is I do hear great consensus amongst the members opposite, support for this bill in a general sense. It will, of course, be going to committee to refine some of the details of it. But I can't help but wonder, with all this co-operation, what life would have been like, how different it may have been, had we not gone through this process of an election, because that bill was in front of us before.

**Interjection:** It wasn't there before.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It was there before, and we would have had a chance to get it there faster.

**Interjection:** You wouldn't be here if we didn't have an election.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I know. I'm not really begrudging the fact that we went through the election; I don't want to give that wrong impression. But we could have worked so co-operatively together as a minority government with this kind of support, and now I'm delighted to see that we do get this support from the members opposite on this very important piece of election.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** And there's no election.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** And there's no election to have to worry about.

**Interjection:**

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Of course.

Now, one of the things that I think we see in this piece of legislation is the Minister of Labour has gone out and consulted very broadly with a wide range of stakeholders, and I think that reflects the kind of approach we will be using as a government, that we will be engaging knowledgeable experts in their field, but not just engaging them; we will be listening to the recommendations, and we are going to great strides to implement those recommendations when they make sense for the government of Ontario.

Part of us going through and consulting—and that will be with members opposite from both the official opposition and the other members. We look forward to your

constructive comments on issues like high workplaces and OHIP benefits. There may be some areas that we might want to refine and make this a better piece of legislation. Thank you for your comments.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased that I'm able to provide a couple of minutes. I know that these two-minute questions and comments don't really give you the opportunity to get into any deep trains of thought, but I do want to acknowledge the member for Essex and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. The debate today with the minister and my good friend the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington does give us an opportunity to put on the record a number of comments.

As a House leader, I'm concerned about omnibus bills, bills that have two different acts that are combined. I'm sure that will come as no surprise to the government House leader, that I get concerned when we mould bills together. I know there's a couple of cases—Bill 21 is sort of the same thing where the government has put a couple of bills together. Regardless of how other governments have done it, I think this government—at least they claim that they're open and transparent; we heard again the government say one thing and do another this morning in question period. It gives an opportunity for the government, regardless of what happened at the ballot box, to help educate people, and I'm a firm believer that we need to educate a little more and maybe legislate a little less.

As someone who worked in a constituency office, and now my own office which takes a tremendous amount of calls, I know one of the concerns that I have is the volume of people who don't understand their rights and don't understand what's in some of the labour legislation. In my office, we've never done anything like an unpaid internship. We do work with some of the local high schools and deal with a co-op placement, but you know what? It's very, very important that each and every one of us, no matter what bill gets tabled, do our job as legislators and make sure we advocate for people so that they understand what's in the laws, so they understand their rights in the workforce. I think if we can put more emphasis on education, we'll do a good job here in the Legislative Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** I'm really enjoying this debate as I'm listening to members from around the House. My dad immigrated to Canada in the early 1960s and was a construction worker—a cement finisher and tile setter. I hear talk of a newcomer registry and occupational health and safety; further to the whole piece on education, I think that's extremely important for us to know, and I'm going to watch how this bill plays out to ensure that the education piece is there. So when we have newcomers to our community—let's say it's Greater Sudbury—and they're working, we need to know that they are there. We need the outreach—the multicultural and folk arts association does a great job with outreach—and we need

to educate them on their rights. Hopefully, those rights include an expanded ability to access social services and health. I think that's extremely important.

In terms of occupational health and safety, whether it's interns, co-ops or new workers to our communities, they need to know that they can turn down work that's not safe. If they don't feel safe, they shouldn't be there. We see that in the mines. To that, I hope that the government shows its progressiveness and brings in anti-replacement legislation. That is extremely important and it's productive. It gets people back to work quicker, and I look forward to that.

I commend my colleagues here, the members from Essex and Kitchener–Waterloo, for their comments—very, very passionate when we talk about heights and we talk about internship rights. Those are things that are extremely important to our community. I can assure you that from our side, and I'm sure from folks across the floor and to the side of us, we'll look at this legislation as it goes through committee and we'll make further comments as necessary. Again, thank you very much for all the comments.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm pleased today to stand and respond to the members from Essex and Kitchener–Waterloo, and to congratulate the minister for bringing forward Bill 18 and for his work in consulting and taking the advice of a wide group of stakeholders.

This is a combination of two bills from the last Legislature. I'm not sure, as the member from Leeds–Grenville asserts, that this is an omnibus bill. I believe that the provisions on tying minimum wage to the CPI are very straightforward and can be easily debated inside this bill, and debated at committee. As well, there's a provision there for that to be reviewed after five years.

I'm not sure that I bought the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington's argument about increasing the minimum wage by CPI every year having that dramatic an effect on our economy.

The bill also removes the \$10,000 cap on recovery, and has an increased statutory limit of two years for recovery, of wages for workers who have been treated unfairly by an employer. I think that's a very important change. It's about fairness—and I did listen very closely to the member from Essex when he spoke about fairness and protections extended to temporary foreign workers. It was very well said. All of us in this Legislature want Ontario to be known in the world as a place that's fair and that treats people equally.

I also listened very closely to his comments on closing the loophole for students in co-op placements. I think that's very important. Our children, our young people, need to learn how to work in a safe environment and what their rights and responsibilities are in that regard.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** One of the New Democrats has the opportunity to reply.

The member for Essex.



**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thanks to my colleagues the members from Beaches–East York, Leeds–Grenville, Kitchener–Waterloo, Sudbury, and Ottawa South. There are lots of really important provisions within this bill. We all look forward to seeing them move along through the process.

The member from Beaches–East York was wondering what it was like prior to the context of a majority government. Well, we had the ability to compel testimony. We had the ability to compel documents. We had the ability to prolong debate. There is no longer that ability; you have all the power now. It's a new reality. But you also have an enormous responsibility, and guess what? If you don't get it done, it is all on your shoulders.

There are people who are waiting for these provisions: health and safety provisions, augmented wage protection, protection for temporary foreign workers and through temp agencies. It's on you. You'll prove your merit now. You'll prove your worth in this place. If you don't get it done, we get another chance, and we certainly won't waste it.

Speaker, I mentioned the disparity between the lowest wage earners and the richest in North America. It's a very, very important issue that has yet to be tackled, I believe, in any substantial way in the province of Ontario. Even Janet Yellen, the head of the Federal Reserve in the States, said that it is the most detrimental problem facing the US economy.

The baby steps that are made in terms of this bill are just that: one step. There are so many more that we've put on the table. We hope that you'll find it in your vision, and also in your mandate, to address those in a substantive way, because our economy and the people of the province beg you to do so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** It's a delight to be able to speak to this bill for a good 20 minutes. It's a very important bill, and we've heard some very good thoughts from members opposite.

I know that in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora there are a number of people and a number of businesses that, specifically if we think about the minimum wage, are very concerned that it hasn't been at a significant rate. So I'm delighted to see that the government will be addressing that, has addressed that and will be tying that to inflation.

I know there were some interesting comments made about the minimum wage really only applying to people who were entering the workforce, but my experience from many years ago is not that. My experience as a high school student working in a lumber yard or working in a gas station was that there were a large number of adults who were trying to support themselves and support their families. They were only making minimum wage. I don't think that has changed. In fact, I think there are more people in that situation today. So it certainly just isn't people who are entering the workforce that we need to deal with.

Our government, through this bill, is committed to standing up for Ontario's workers. That means strengthening workplace protection and increasing fairness for both employees and business. It's truly a pleasure, as I said earlier, to support this proposed legislation, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. It really builds on, I think, this government's strong track record of raising living standards for workers.

It's important to remember that when we came to office, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** How long?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Eight years straight.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** It's like Siberia.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Worse than Siberia. That was not fair to workers who saw their cost of living increase while their wages stayed frozen.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Whose government did this?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** We know whose government did that, yes: the government previous.

That's why our government has increased the minimum wage from \$6.85 per hour to the \$11 per hour it is today. As my colleagues mentioned, our proposed legislation, if passed, would establish a fair and predictable means of increasing the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation. It would take important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheck they have earned at the end of the day. It would help safeguard temporary foreign workers who have come to our province and deserve workplace fairness, and it would better protect the interns and other unpaid learners from dangerous work situations. Importantly, it would increase competitiveness for businesses that obey our laws and play by the rules.

I just want to take one second to talk about my own work experience. When I was in school I went on a co-op placement. It was one of the best experiences I ever had, because it taught me, hands on, how to do my job. I was paid a small honorarium. I was also paid for mileage. I had to drive around as a cub newspaper reporter. It led to a full-time job. I've seen that repeated with my children, and friends of my children, who have been in co-op programs and have reaped the benefits of hands-on learning. So I'm delighted to see legislation that will strengthen the protection for those co-op workers, those co-op students.

If passed, this legislation would establish a fair, predictable and transparent approach to setting minimum wage in the future. This legislation would require all future adjustments to the minimum wage to be annual and tied to increases in Ontario's consumer price index. Personally, I think that's the least we can do. This would ensure that Ontario's minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living in a way that allows our businesses to plan for the future and continue to create jobs. We heard some good news about that earlier today.

Mr. Speaker, people in this province work hard, and at the end of their shift or rounds they deserve to be paid for that work. If they're operating a business they deserve to

know their competitor isn't undercutting them by not paying their workers. Unfortunately right now, there are both time and monetary limits on claiming unpaid wages. So we're making it easier for workers to get the money owed them by proposing to remove the \$10,000 cap under the Employment Standards Act on the recovery of unpaid wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay. That means employees would no longer be forced to pursue larger claims to the courts, saving both workers and businesses time and money.

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If passed, Ontario will also increase the time limit for recovery of wages under the Employment Standards Act to two years, so that older claims are dealt with fairly and workers get the money they're owed.

The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to 130,000 in 2013. Now is the time to act. Speaker, no one should ever have to surrender their passport to be promised a job that doesn't exist or be charged inappropriate recruitment fees. That's why the proposed changes would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act our government passed in 2009, to apply to all temporary foreign workers in Ontario who are here through an immigration program like the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program. That would mean temporary foreign workers would have protection against being charged recruitment fees and having personal documents such as passports withheld by employers.

Speaker, many of us in this House often hear from workers who are unable to find a permanent job but, rather, are working through a temporary help agency. Our government was the first in Canada to introduce legislation specifically addressing temporary help agencies in 2009. That legislation made sure employees were not unfairly prevented from being hired directly by employers. It prohibited agencies from charging fees to workers for such things as resumé writing and interview preparation, and it required agencies to provide employees with information about their rights under the Employment Standards Act. I'm glad that these new protections, if passed, will better protect workers recruited through the temporary help agencies by establishing joint and several liability between agencies and their clients for failure to pay wages. This will help level the playing field for good employers. Clients of agencies would be liable for regular wages and overtime pay if the agencies don't pay up, encouraging those companies to use agencies that treat their employees fairly.

Speaker, we also know safe workplaces come down to people looking after one another. I said earlier, as a father of three children who have been through co-op placements, I'm very concerned that my children are safe and all young people are safe as they enter these programs. The Ministry of Labour has been undergoing its largest transformation in the last 30 years, creating a culture that puts health and safety at the centre of every workplace. Our job is to make sure workers go home to their families at the end of the day. That's what people

expect when they go to work or they go to a co-op placement, and that's what they deserve.

Speaker, Ontario has very clear rules that if you are performing work for someone, you are entitled to rights and protections under the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. That means you must be paid at least minimum wage, no matter what your job title is or what you agreed to when you started working there. Currently, the Occupational Health and Safety Act clearly covers paid workers. This bill, if passed, would ensure that coverage for unpaid co-op students and other unpaid trainees and learners performing work for course credit as part of a secondary or post-secondary school program—it would ensure that such unpaid students would have the same rights and protections as other workers.

Speaker, the proposed Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act is about taking action to protect workers, especially the most vulnerable, and levelling the playing field for businesses that play by the rules. We want to ensure that employees are paid for the work they do and that temporary help agency employees are provided the fairness they deserve. We want to ensure that foreign workers have the protection they deserve. We can and must work together to protect the most vulnerable in our province. This proposed legislation is about standing up for some of the most vulnerable workers in our province and providing them with the safeguards they need and deserve.

As I said earlier, this proposed legislation will establish a fair and predictable means of increasing the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation; take important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheque they've earned at the end of the day; and help safeguard temporary foreign workers who have come to our province and deserve workplace fairness.

Again, it would better protect the interns and other unpaid learners from dangerous work situations; and, importantly, it would increase competitiveness for businesses that obey our laws and play by the rules.

We're all aware of growth in precarious and temporary work that has taken place not only in our province but across Ontario, and that includes employment where workers are in temporary jobs. It's also a key factor in poverty and near-poverty. As my colleague alluded to earlier today, a recent report from the United Way and McMaster University, *It's More than Poverty*, brought attention to the problem of this precarious work. The government has also taken note of a report on vulnerable workers and precarious work from the Law Commission of Ontario.

That's why I'm happy to be here today to talk about our bill that would help enforce our laws and protect the vulnerable, especially vulnerable workers who are owed money by their employers.

Our bill also reflects that we have heard from Ontarians about the need they have, due to the changing nature of work in our province, which is also occurring throughout Canada.



I've touched on a few of the basic provisions of the bill. I appreciate highly that, if passed, it will amend the Employment Standards Act to remove that \$10,000 cap on recovery of wages and increase the limit of recovery from six months to two years. It would provide that additional protection for temporary help agency workers, as well as requiring employers to provide workers with a free copy of information about their employment standards rights.

I heard a member opposite talk about how important it is. I think all of us here agree on how important it is for us to know—for all of our employees to understand what their employment standards rights are, especially when it comes to health and safety.

They will do this when this bill passes and, if requested, translate it into their language, if it's available from the ministry. It will enable the Ministry of Labour to require that employers complete a self-audit of their records and practices, to determine compliance with the ESA.

I think it's a very important provision of this bill that would provide fairness and justice to temporary foreign workers and that would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act—that's the 2009 bill I mentioned earlier—and extend the protections that currently apply to live-in caregivers to all foreign employees who come to Ontario under an immigration or foreign temporary employment program.

For those employed by temporary help agencies—we know that employment in this sector has increased in recent years—the proposed legislation builds, as I mentioned, on that 2009 legislation by ensuring temporary agency assignment employees aren't charged fees for things like resumé writing or taking a job with an agency client, and they are not prevented from becoming permanently employed.

If passed, Bill 18 will amend the Employment Standards Act to make temporary help agencies and their clients jointly and severally liable for certain unpaid wages owed to the agency's employees.

As I mentioned before, as someone who was at co-op and has children who have been through co-op programs, the bill will also amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to extend to unpaid co-op students and other unpaid learners the same health and safety rights as paid workers have. Even if you're a co-op student in a university, college or other program where you're receiving educational credits, you deserve the same health and safety protections as every other worker, and that's exactly what the government is intending to ensure with the proposed amendment. Under our bill, unpaid students, learners and trainees would be defined as workers under the OHSA and would have the same rights and duties as the paid workers they work alongside.

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Let me point to an example: They'd have the right to know about workplace hazards, the right to participate in joint health and safety committees and have safety representatives, and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Unpaid learners such as co-op students would also have the same duties as paid workers. Again, as an example, they would have to work in compliance with the OHSA and regulations, operate equipment safely and report any hazards or contraventions to the employer or supervisor. These explicit obligations would enhance their accountability to the employer and other workers. As participants in co-operative education programs, co-op students, like other workers, receive basic health and safety instruction, including information on the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System before entering a workplace.

I can only say, as a summer student who worked in hazardous situations, that I welcome this. I sometimes look back and wonder how I made it through those high school years working in environments that were clearly not safe. I think it was because I managed to find mentors who stuck by me and guided me through the dangerous situations.

We must build and strengthen our province's economy and businesses, but we must also protect Ontario's most vulnerable employees. I want to take just a second to describe some of the work the Ministry of Labour is currently undertaking to protect those vulnerable workers, including the temporary foreign workers.

This past September, as my colleague alluded to earlier, the ministry began a three-month employment standards blitz focusing on vulnerable employees. The ministry employment standards officers are conducting inspections to determine compliance with the Employment Standards Act, focusing on sectors known to hire a high proportion of vulnerable or temporary foreign workers, including restaurants, building services and personal care services—for example, hair, esthetics and massage services.

Our inspectors are also focusing on business support services such as collection agencies, call centres and horticultural businesses like nurseries and greenhouses. Employment standards officers will check for compliance with core employment standards under the Employment Standards Act, with particular focus on public holidays, vacation pay, minimum wage, record keeping and payment of wages.

Our government is taking major steps to fulfill its commitment to protect vulnerable employees by enhancing enforcement of the Employment Standards Act. As part of the 2013 budget, the government invested ongoing funding of \$3 million for additional employment standards officers and staff.

Our government is committed to building a more prosperous Ontario while creating the jobs of today and tomorrow and providing more opportunities for all. It's important to remember that when we came to office, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight. That was not fair to workers, who saw their cost of living increase while their wages stayed frozen. That's why our government has increased the minimum wage by 50% since 2003. We increased it during good times and during the depths of the recession because it was the right thing

to do. Ontario went from having one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada to one of the highest because that's what hard-working families deserve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to make comment on my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora and the words he shared with us. As I've said each time I've stood here today, the key, absolutely, for any legislation that I look at is health and safety, so we support that wholeheartedly. Anything that is going to improve health and safety—how could we not vote for that and try to find those improvements?

I'm supportive, of course, of making employees and employers as knowledgeable as possible. I think my colleague from Leeds–Grenville said that he certainly experienced a lot of people calling his office who don't really understand their rights and obligations. So anything, again, that can help that, to make all of us safer, certainly is a good thing.

He talked a lot, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, about co-op programs, and he was very supportive of the value of those and the benefits of having co-op programs. Certainly in reading this legislation originally, I have a concern, and I'll extend it to interns as well: What happens if we actually, as a result of this legislation, because companies or businesses, or in my case—I used to be a municipal recreation director and employed a lot of people—engaged a lot of people, I should say—in co-ops. We didn't have the budget; we didn't have the ability to pay those students. Without the budget, you just wouldn't offer those. So now those young students' career opportunities are going to be missed. I have very much concern.

Similarly, interns—I had an intern here, Domna Theodorou, a fabulous young lady. In fact, she came to me and asked for the opportunity to have some experience. She didn't want payment. In fact, we didn't even talk about payment. She just really was extremely wanting to be able to have that opportunity to work here. And it was great. She stayed with me longer than her actual placement of her own volition. I think that's wonderful.

The concern I have, really, with this bill is that there are a lot of things when they've combined them into an omnibus. They're taking two pieces of legislation and combining them into one. I'm fearful. What things might just get swept through without proper debate? Have the stakeholders been widely enough consulted to ensure that everyone who is looking at this legislation truly knows—in a lot of legislation, there are unintended consequences. Have they looked at it from a rural perspective? Again, in a case like my area, are we going to lose out on co-op and internships that may provide the only opportunity for those people to get some valuable training?

Mr. Speaker, I'm very supportive of this and look forward to it going to committee so we can scrutinize every piece before it gets put into legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It is indeed a pleasure to stand and make comments on the member's comments from Newmarket–Aurora. I firmly believe his heart is in the right place on this issue. The one thing that stood out for me was when he talked about tying the increase to the minimum wage to the cost of living. He said, "It's the least we can do." I agree; it is the least you can do, because I think you could do more. I think you could do a lot more. If that means making the minimum wage \$12 and then tying it to the cost of living, that would be doing more.

In my way of thinking, Speaker, I'd like to come to work every day in this chamber with the other 106 members of the Legislature and say to myself, "What's the best we can do today? What's the best we can do for the people of Ontario today?" Not "What's the least we can do for the people of Ontario today?"

He also talked about doing this in a fair and predictable manner, which is good. That's why we as New Democrats had proposed a \$12 minimum wage with annual increases but balanced by a tax reduction in the rate for small business owners, which would make it more affordable to pay the higher rate.

I know, as I was a former municipal councillor, and the member from Newmarket–Aurora was too, if somebody came to him, a constituent came and said, "My basement is flooding;" or "I've got potholes on my street," in that career, he would have said, "What's the best we can do?" Not "What's the least we can do to resolve those problems?" So I know his heart is in the right place. I know he wants to do more. I would hope that within his caucus, he would champion the cause for doing more for the people of Ontario, because I think we can do that and I think that's the right thing to do, the best we can do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very delighted to rise today to speak in support of the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. I want to commend the member for Newmarket–Aurora for his very supportive words. I also want to commend the Minister of Labour for working with a long list of stakeholders who crafted this legislation together. It's going to stand up for workers in Ontario. You have heard us talk about how this bill is not only going to increase wages, and that is for people in our society who need the help the most, but it's also going to protect vulnerable workers who face dangerous situations.

I've been sitting here listening to some discussion about immigrant workers, and I'm reflecting on the experiences of my own family. My parents came to this country in the late 1950s. They were in their early twenties. They took whatever work they could. My mother was 23 and went to work in a dry cleaner's in north-end Toronto and spent 18 years pressing shirts. She used to tell stories about how, before air conditioning, it could get up to 120 Fahrenheit in the dry cleaner's in July and August. My father worked his entire life in construction.



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I remember that they would come home and often talk about the poor working conditions and the poor pay, so we're very familiar with this in our family. They are now in their 80s, and I am certain that they would champion this very important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we want to get on with the job of investing in working people in Ontario. We want to improve on our dynamic business environment and do this in the great province of Ontario. Again, I support this legislation and think it is going to go a long way toward helping people in this province who are the most vulnerable, who are looking for better wages and who are looking for a much safer working environment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise in the House today and comment on Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. As a number of speakers have said, this legislation, if passed and probably improved at committee—if we get it to committee and can take a look at some suggestions from the industry and from the workers themselves, and of course from the different members and their experiences, I'm sure it will be better legislation at the end of the day.

I certainly applaud a number of recommendations in there. The one about removing the \$10,000 cap on retrieval of wages is certainly something that is probably long overdue. The trouble with the bill, if there is any, is that when you combine a number of different acts and have an omnibus piece of legislation, there can be issues that you find out later. I'm sure that when we get to committee we'll be able to iron all those out.

It's been interesting listening to the different stories from different people from different backgrounds about their experiences with interns and students and that. I'm certainly in favour of stronger workplace rules for young people—young men and women—who come into the workplace. We've seen too many tragedies in the past.

I come out of heavy industry, and safety was always foremost there. But I know that there are a number of industries that still don't have that luxury, that don't have that type of training. I applaud and would like to support anything that will improve the conditions for those young men and women, and actually the adults who still work there, so I'll speak in favour of the legislation today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our opportunity for questions and comments. We now return to the member for Newmarket-Aurora for his two-minute response.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Who scrambles quickly for notes.

I think the comments from members across the House are well thought out. I may not agree with all of them, but I certainly think that everyone's heart is in the right place.

We understand that we need to protect workers, especially our most vulnerable workers. We need to make sure that business is protected, as well, and that it knows

what it can plan for. So I'm quite happy to see this legislation move forward. I'm quite happy to see that vulnerable workers and inexperienced workers, as I've mentioned before, especially those who have experienced working in dangerous places with chemicals or heavy equipment, will be better protected. We know that when our youth and our vulnerable employees are not protected, it leads to tragedy, and that's just absolutely not right.

I look forward to this legislation moving forward and being passed. I look forward to the minimum wage being indexed, so that employees will be treated fairly and so that our marketplace will be fair for all.

We rely on so many temporary foreign workers. I can think of the riding just to the north of me, which includes the Holland Marsh, with a lot of industrious people helping us to harvest vegetables from that fantastic salad bowl of Ontario, as we call it. We need to make sure they are taken care of, as well. I think this is a great bill. I look forward to moving it through.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014. I will give the government credit for being very creative with the titles of their bills.

I understand that this bill is actually a combination of two bills from the last Legislature—Bill 146 and Bill 165—and you have heard some concerns that they perhaps shouldn't be combined.

Some of the things that it sets out to do are to provide more protection under the Employment Standards Act, to remove the \$10,000 cap, and to increase to two years the time limit on the recovery of wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay. It introduces joint and several liability between temporary help agencies and their clients from paid regular wages and overtime pay. It requires employers to provide all employees with a copy of the Ministry of Labour employment standards information in a language that they can understand. It gives the Ministry of Labour employment standards officers the authority to require employers to conduct a self-audit to determine compliance with the Employment Standards Act. And of course, the previous Bill 165—it changes the minimum wage to tie it to the Ontario consumer price index future increases.

I would like the opportunity to speak to some of these parts of the bill. I'll start off with the comments the minister made. He said that employees who do the work deserve to be paid, and I completely agree with that. He mentioned that it would make the Employment Standards Act apply to interns.

That made me think of my daughter, Renee, who went to school for marketing at Guelph. She took a four-year marketing program. One summer, she got a job as an intern down on Bay Street at a marketing company. They didn't pay her much money. To make ends meet, she took a second job a few hundred metres away at a

cooking store. As it turned out, she discovered that she liked cooking a lot better than marketing. That led her to change careers and go back to George Brown College and do a chef's course. I'm happy to say that she's happily employed and very passionate about cooking now. Unfortunately, she's not in this country. That's the only problem. She's over in London, England, working at a fancy restaurant called Le Gavroche, and very, very much has found her passion.

In terms of the minimum wage, I think we all want to see people earning as much money as possible. It was pointed out by the critic that Ontario seems to have a much higher percentage of people earning minimum wage than other provinces. I pose the question, what do we need to get people earning more money? I'm not sure that minimum wage is the only tool. I think it has a lot more to do with skills development and giving particularly our young people, but all residents, the ability to improve their skills so they can get the jobs that are out there.

In the last couple of weeks, I met with a business owner in the Parry Sound area: Bill Connor, who owns Connor Industries in Parry Sound. They produce Stanley boats that are shipped around the world. You see lots of them around Georgian Bay and Parry Sound. They're quality boats that are used by the OPP and the coast guard and are shipped literally around the world. One of the main reasons he wanted to meet with me was the fact that he's not able to fill all his orders because he can't get enough skilled workers. In the case of building aluminum boats, that tends to be a lot of welders and other people who work in metal. It was actually affecting his business. That's one of his biggest challenges: He's forever training welders, and then either losing them or needing more welders. It actually affects his ability to—he'd be able to do more business and employ more people, if he could find more skilled people. These are good jobs that pay very well—much above minimum wage. I think we need to find ways to get people the skills so they can take advantage of these good jobs.

1710 One of the points that he brought up in the meeting: The Near North District School Board has made their capital priority for this year—and I'm pleased to see the Minister of Education here today—the JK-to-grade-12 school proposed for Parry Sound in the recent proposal.

Bill Connor from Connor Industries said, "Can there please be a shop class at that school to get more young people interested and get them some skills so that they can become future employees at Connor Industries and stay in the Parry Sound area?" I said, "I think you're asking at the right time, seeing as the school hasn't been built or designed or approved." So I would certainly make that suggestion. I think it is an opportunity to get more people those skills so they can get the good jobs.

On the other side of the riding, I attended a session at the Almaguin high school, and they had businesses there. Again, there were a number of businesses that want to hire people but they're having difficulty getting people

with the skills. I recall that Kent Trusses was there. They needed people that knew how to run the computerized equipment used in truss manufacturing, and they're having difficulty finding the skilled people necessary to do that.

That makes me think of the report that was done in February of 2010 by Dr. Rick Miner, the former president of Seneca College. The title of that report was *People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People*. It points out that in the next few years, if we don't—I look at it as an opportunity, but the report pointed out that by 2031, there would be one million unskilled people in Ontario without jobs, and at the same time, one million skilled positions going unfilled. So I look at that as a tremendous opportunity, a way that, if we can get those people the skills, they're going to earn way above minimum wage and have good jobs and the ability to provide a good living for themselves and their families.

I think that increasing minimum wage is not the only answer. Having said that, I think business likes to be able to plan. Tying the increases to the CPI does give business the opportunity to plan towards increased costs.

I think business also wants to be treated fairly. I recently met with a company that makes firewood. The complaint of that small company was that their competitors are not charging tax on their firewood. He's a bigger firewood company, and he's playing by the rules, and charges the HST as he should be doing, but he says he loses all kinds of business because he'll have someone inquiring and, "It's this price plus HST," and they want to do it for cash. He says, "No, I've got to collect the tax." There are a lot of his competitors that aren't. So I would say that the government has a job making sure it's a level playing field for all the businesses so that it's fair for them all. Of course the benefit should be that the government, which is in great need of revenue, would end up with some more revenue to help address that big \$12-billion deficit.

I guess I'd say about this legislation that I do have some concerns that it continues with the trend that government has had for many years, and that is being very, very prescriptive versus trying to set goals and trying to educate.

As an example, it prescribes that employers must have a poster with the most recent rules, I believe, given to each employee. Sure; I don't argue with that, but it seems awfully detail-oriented. You wouldn't think you'd need to have quite that detail. When you talk to businesses or organizations like independent business, small business, they'll point out that the cost of regulation is some \$11 billion a year, and particularly for small businesses, which are the big job creators, I think that's very true. If you're a small businessperson, you cannot possibly know all the rules you're governed by, all the laws you're governed by. It's just impossible. If you have three people working in your company, you'd have to spend all your time trying to learn the rules and you have no time to run your business.

From my own experience of being in business back a few years ago now, in the resort business for 25, 30



years, I've seen a change, and not in a good way. I think most businesses are not out to break the rules; they want to be within the rules, but they also want to be successful in their business, make money and employ people. If they're spending all their time trying to learn about the rules and comply with government regulations, they don't have time and/or it's very expensive, so it makes them uncompetitive.

I think back to the way it formerly was when government was willing to take some risk and accept some liability on themselves. I think back to even something like applying for a septic licence to build a new septic system back about 1998 in my former resort business. At that point, I didn't know a lot about septic systems, but I walked into the Ministry of the Environment, they gave me a form and the person there actually helped me fill out the form. Then they actually came on the site of the resort and walked the property with me. I assumed I was going to have to build some huge septic system. They pointed to an area and said, "Well, what about this area?" which was a much smaller area. "You could put a Whitby bed." I said, "What is a Whitby bed?" They actually explained it to me and, in that case, myself and an employee ended up building the septic system ourselves. It's still in operation and it's still functioning. Government was helpful, willing to take some risks and actually providing assistance to you.

To the end of my time in the resort business, when we were going to apply to build a new septic system, you had to hire a consultant just to fill out the form. There's no way you could possibly do it. It just has become so much more complicated and the government is not willing to offer any advice, I assume because then they would be considered to be liable for that advice.

I think back to the first time we saw a fire inspector at my past business, which was, I think, about 1976 or 1977. Before that, they just didn't exist in the province, or didn't exist in Muskoka anyway. The fire inspector showed up. I worked with him for about 20 years. His name was Glen Medland, and unfortunately he's passed on now at far too young an age, but he was very helpful for me as the operator of this business. He would actually call me and say, "By the way, did you know the rules have changed? You're going to have to put five eighths fire code gypsum up in the hallways of your lodge. You're going to need fire doors." He knew the business was relatively seasonal at that point, so he said, "I'll come around and inspect in September. That way, you'll have all winter to actually make the changes." But he helped to educate me on what I needed to be doing. If they came around, inspected and they'd find violations, then you'd comply with them and have them done for the next season. That changed over the 20 years I worked with him in that at the end of his time, he had absolutely no leeway. He couldn't offer suggestions. He couldn't offer help to the businessperson who's trying to comply by the rules. He could just come in and write violations.

I think that's been the tendency of government. They're hiring lots of inspectors to find businesses in

violation and give them the ticket, whereas most businesses are trying to comply with the rules. They could use some help in complying with the rules, but that's not the way we've been going in my experience in recent years. So I think you could change and be much more goal oriented with the rules that we have and provide a lot more assistance to businesses that want to comply. I think it would be far more productive and cost far less for everyone in society if we did that.

As I say, that's not been the trend, and I think it's disappointing. But I think education is certainly far more important than just writing the rules for how we're going to fine you next in terms of the individual business. So it is something that I would like to see changed over time.

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How else can we create more jobs in this province? Well, we need an electricity policy that makes affordable electricity part of the goal. I mean, we just need to look at a place like Timmins: I think it was Xstrata Nickel that lost 700 good-paying jobs just a couple of years ago that moved across the border to Quebec. They're still doing the work, but unfortunately it's not being done in Ontario anymore because of our high energy costs. So that's another part of the puzzle: If we want to keep good jobs here, we need to have affordable electricity prices.

I'm concerned about Kimberly-Clark in Huntsville: a couple of hundred people employed—good jobs—making Kleenex tissue products. You know, they've come to me, and I've met with the Minister of Energy. They're concerned with the reliability of electricity and the cost, and the fact that of all their mills doing similar work in North America, they have the highest electricity price of any of the mills. That affects their ability to compete, even within the company, for capital that's available to expand and create more jobs that are not minimum wage jobs, but jobs that pay far above that. I think those are the sorts of things that we need to do in order to create more good-paying jobs that will provide more opportunity here in the province of Ontario.

I did note that our critic, the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, was okay with some of the aspects of this bill. We haven't had it at caucus yet, so I'm sure we'll want to do that. I think it will be important that it goes to committee, because we've heard people talk about unintended consequences, I don't pretend to know all the nuances of the bill. I think it will be important to hear from people who are involved in some of the businesses that will be affected and from employees as well—both employers and employees—that they can come before committee and maybe point out things that we as legislators might not be aware of.

It is interesting that Ontario currently does seem to have a far higher percentage of people earning minimum wage. I think that's something we need to change and work toward changing. I don't know whether this bill is actually the bill to make that happen, but there are some aspects of it that we will look forward to supporting. I think that's about all the comments I have for today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka's response to G18. It's always interesting to get a sense of where people speak from, really. Usually we can find some commonalities, and in this case, we can.

I certainly agree with the member's comments with regard to the minimum wage versus good jobs debate. We of course support an increased minimum wage. I think ours was \$12, tied to inflation. But I do agree with the member on the skilled trades piece. He references the new K-to-12 school for that riding and the importance of having tech and industrial programming, because very soon there is going to be a skilled trades gap, which is key to our economy, to our transportation file and to our infrastructure file. It's key to our economy. We share his concerns with future generations having the skills—acquiring skills through the education system—in order to move forward and get good jobs.

Where I don't agree with him and his comments—specifically his comments around this piece of legislation—is providing some of the latitude for employers around workplace conditions and standards. I think that the key thing he referenced is that education is pretty much good enough. But in areas around safety, we wouldn't have such a high injury rate in the province of Ontario if education was good enough. As I referenced earlier, our falls from heights continue to be a growing concern.

So there are some instances where oversight and compliance are needed, and it needs to be prescriptive. It shouldn't be optional. Safety should never be optional. The employer should never have the right to overrule in that regard. But on the skilled trades, he's right. We need a plan for this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's my pleasure to rise for two minutes to make some comments about Bill 18.

To the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka: My son lives in this great part of the province, and I always enjoy visiting those communities, like Bala and so forth.

My sense, not from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka but from other members from all sides of the House, is that there seems to be substantial support for this piece of legislation, and I think it's long overdue.

I, too, come from an immigrant family. I'm an immigrant. I remember my mother working in a factory. It was a machine shop where they made little widgets of different kinds. My father, like many other Italian immigrants of the day, worked in construction.

When I was 13 years old, I had the pleasure of working every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the local butcher's shop at St. Clair and Dufferin, for the whopping amount of \$3 a week for those three days after school.

When you talk about the health and safety of a workplace, I think—not that I knew what that was back

then, but certainly some of the conditions that we worked in, that my mother worked in and my father worked in, weren't probably what we're trying to do here.

I think we've come a long way, and this is certainly long overdue. I hope that, with whatever tweaking we have to do, we get this passed. Let's move on for the health and safety of the workers, who really provide what Ontario is today, which we truly enjoy.

I encourage this to move on swiftly and quickly.  
**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's always a valuable expenditure of time to listen to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He knows the hospitality industry, and he had to make a payroll for a number of years in a tourism-dependent business. You depended on the vagaries of the weather and consumers' tastes and where they wanted to go for their holidays.

It's interesting that he made mention of his daughter being in the food business. My daughter has been in the food business for a number of years, in the kitchen trade. It's something that many people do now, after they get a university degree. You go where the work is, and you go where the money is.

Obviously, this kind of legislation is of great importance for people working in those kinds of industries, but also for the people who are creating the jobs in these kinds of industries.

I want to refer to section 23.1(10). It's interesting, if people haven't noticed this, that every five years, we take a look at wage rates, in addition to the annual CPI:

“Before October 1, 2020, and every five years thereafter, the minister shall cause a review of the minimum wage and the process for adjusting the minimum wage to be commenced.”

We know there has been a call for a \$12 minimum wage, a \$14 minimum wage. I assume this opens up that five-year window for those kinds of decisions to be made in conjunction with the annual CPI adjustment, which I think is a good idea. It provides certainty for business and for the people we've been talking about during this debate who are working at a minimum wage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** It's good to speak on this topic again. There were very interesting comments from the member to my right in terms of trades. I believe we need a strong minimum wage policy—a strong, high minimum wage. If we take a look, for example, at the youth who are in school, who may still live at home, a strong minimum wage would also allow them to have more spending power, and they're the ones who are going to buy their first car and rent an apartment, etc.

There were very interesting comments about trades. We do need to go back, because the trades do provide good wages. A unionized trade or non-unionized trade, I think, is very important to the economy of this province and the buying power of those who pick up a trade. As an educator for 20 years, I spent a lot of time really preach-



ing that, just as my dad did—and many of my friends and relatives—and many new people are going into the trades. University, college and maybe the workplace are options, but trades and apprenticeship programs are extremely important.

1730

We take a look at Algonquin Road Public School in Nickel Belt, just on the other side of the Sudbury riding. Darren Foy is a grade 7 and 8 teacher with the Rainbow board who has brought back—and now the other boards are coming on board—shop programs, if you will, to grade 7 and 8 students. This is spurring those, then, to go on to the new programs that are happening at the high schools and getting into apprentice programs when they are 16 and 17, and then moving on to a really rewarding career. So those trades jobs are important.

Members of this House, I think we can never lose sight of the fact that the trades are vital to the economy of this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's it for questions and comments. I return to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka to reply.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the members from Northumberland–Quinte West, Haldimand–Norfolk, and Sudbury for their comments. I certainly agree with the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that safety should not be optional.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk commented on his daughter also being in the food industry. Certainly I was more surprised than probably anyone when my daughter, Renee, got into the cooking business. Having grown up around a commercial kitchen I would have thought she would never want to be around one ever, but it's certainly her passion.

The member from Sudbury talking about our youth: I think part of the problem is we have pretty much the highest unemployment category with youth, roughly around 20%. That is a big challenge. I think sometimes if you have too high a minimum wage you'll have fewer jobs. I know I've spoken to owners of businesses who say, "We have this budgeted for wages, and when it's used up, it's used up." Or "I don't make any money, so it just means I hire people for less hours." That certainly is a concern.

I agree with Dr. Miner in his report, *People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People*, where he says we need a change in attitude towards post-secondary. We need more people in college; we need more people in trades; we need more people apprenticing. I think that should be a priority of the government.

I'm not so sure that their College of Trades helps. I think it actually does the reverse, but I think it should be the priority to take advantage of that opportunity and get our young people, in particular, the skills they need so they can get good jobs in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and talk about important issues and these are definitely important ones.

Before I start my comments on Bill 18, *Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act*, I'd like to say this is Agriculture Week, and we're going to do a more formal announcement on it tomorrow. In my former life, when I made my living with my hands—I still talk with my hands, but I used to make my living with my hands; I was a farmer for 30 years. I'd like to recognize all my colleagues out in the fields who actually support the agricultural industry and those 700,000 jobs. I don't know about the rest of the province, but this year in Timiskaming–Cochrane it's been our wettest year since 1966; there are crops rotting in the fields. If there's one thing that defines a farmer, it's when he sees his work drowning in front of him and deep down he's wondering, "How can I stop it? I hope it's better next year." That's what defines a farmer. That's why we will always have food security in this country because farmers are like that. They're always looking ahead. They will go over any barrier to grow their crop for next year.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I could talk about tile drainage, Minister of Northern Development and Mines. There's a program in northern Ontario right now for tile drainage, and tile drainage makes a huge difference.

The reason I wanted to start with agriculture is because this bill has a lot to do with agriculture, if you think about it, both from the minimum wage side and from the workplace safety side.

Often I talk to my colleagues, and sometimes, when they listen—some farmers, some of my colleagues actually listen to the House, and other employers also—sometimes employers feel a bit beaten down, because when they hear legislators talk about the bills, it's always that they're doing everything wrong. I'd just like to make it clear: One thing that I think we've agreed on, on all sides, is that the vast majority of employers are good employers. They want to do things right. The reason we're having to talk about legislation to fix things is the minority who, for whatever reason, don't do things right.

But the vast majority of employers—the vast majority of farmers, contractors and people like that—want good employees. They want to pay their employees well. That's how they keep them. I know that when I had my farm, the best thing I could do was to have a long-time employee, and the way you keep a long-time employee is a happy employee, a healthy employee with a healthy family; and that's what this bill is about.

As far as the minimum wage, this is two pieces of legislation put together, and they do fit and they don't fit. Our party strongly believes that we should have a higher minimum wage. We campaigned on that. We have always pushed for that. We always will push for that. We fundamentally don't believe—and there is lots of documentation to prove it—that making the minimum wage higher destroys jobs or makes for less work.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It doesn't.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It doesn't. But there are caveats to that, and we recognize that, because in sectors—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The vegetable and fruit sector is one; they're competing against imported product, which is produced at lower wages.

Something else—this isn't exactly related to the bill, but it is in a way: Buying Ontario food is fantastic. It's fresh, it's local, but it's also grown under much more stringent conditions. The red tape that some people complain about in a way makes things a lot safer, a lot better. I could go on for a long time about the things they can grow in Mexico, the things they can use there and which we can't use here. People should have a better understanding of that. But the growers here have to compete with the stuff coming in from Mexico. So if the minimum wage goes up, they can't just tack that onto their price, because they won't sell their product.

Now, we recognized that in our platform. We wanted to put in some kind of mechanism to compensate businesses that could not accommodate that in their business structure. We still think that's something that should be brought forward. It's very important.

On the minimum wage issue, one thing: I had the opportunity of being here the whole afternoon. Maybe because it's the start of a new session—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** First day.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** —it's the first day and it's Monday, and we're all bright and chipper, it was a great debate, actually, this afternoon. We had a great speaker—  
*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** —and great staff. No, but it was, and there were a lot of good points this afternoon—even one from the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. I disagree with almost everything he stands for, but he's very articulate, and he makes very good points.

One of the points that he made—and I believe another member made it as well—is that this is going to be reviewed in five years, but by the minister, not by the Legislature. We have a fundamental problem with that, not just in this piece of legislation, but in a lot of pieces of legislation. We've just gone through an election where we spent a lot of time talking about transparency, and yet I come back here on the first day of this session, and again, what we're trying to do is to get information from the government. That shouldn't be that hard, and yet it is.

When you have to work that hard to get a business plan for a loan that happened three years ago, then you start to wonder, really, shouldn't this be brought back to the Legislature to discuss? A lot of these issues should be brought back to the Legislature, and on that fundamental issue, I fully agree with the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. More power should be brought back to the Legislature. We would spend a lot less time fighting to extricate information that belongs to the people of Ontario.

1740

He brought up another good point. If the minimum wage is indexed to the CPI, which we agree with, why

wouldn't ODSP and OW be indexed, as well? The answer to that is, because that would cost the government money, whereas increasing the minimum wage costs the employer money. In farm talk, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. Sometimes the things that we deal with—and we deal with it in all of our constituency offices. Is anyone in this House going to tell me that the ODSP rates are high enough? They're not. We could do much better.

One thing that struck me in this debate, and a couple of members came at it in a couple of different ways—I don't think we have a lot of argument with the basic premise of this legislation. We could make this a little bit better or make that a lot better, but the basic premise behind the legislation is good. But the people who are impacted most by this legislation—temporary foreign workers, people like that—there's something they don't have that the people in this House do. It's called privilege. I can stand here and say I have been aggrieved, and I can make my case, and I try to occasionally. But if I'm working at an insecure job or I'm a temporary foreign worker, it doesn't matter how great this legislation is, if I'm afraid to speak—and I don't see anything in this legislation that is going to help that. Actually, I heard things coming from the government side that made me even more wary. I heard, "Well, we're having a blitz." What about the people who were missed by the blitz? If you can do a blitz and get a whole bunch of, "Oh, there's someone who's doing it wrong, and there's someone who's doing it wrong"—and again, the vast majority of employers are doing things right. I'd really like to make that clear. Blitzing is not going to help with the employer who doesn't get blitzed who isn't doing it right. It's certainly not going to help those employees, because they don't have what I'm exercising right now. They don't have the ability to stand up and know that they won't be punished for it by losing their jobs.

Actually, if I don't stand up, I'll be punished by losing my job, but that's a whole different ball of wax.

It's something I would really like to focus on and something no one has really answered, in my opinion.

Again, I go back to the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. He brought forward that there were personal hygiene inspectors and made light of it. I had never heard of a personal hygiene inspector.

I do hope that there are actually enough people who are approachable, because otherwise—one of the reasons I ran for this job is because there are all kinds of pieces of legislation that sound really good in this House, that make great press releases, but that don't work on the ground.

I was fortunate enough to listen to the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka's presentation, as well. He made the same point. It has been my experience that government used to be there to help, and that has fallen by the wayside. When people come to our office, it's hard to get government to help. It's either nothing at all, or when you push hard, then the hammer comes down. But what



about the people who don't come to our offices? That's the part that, with this legislation, and with a lot of legislation, we really should stop and think about. Because it's fine to pat yourself on the back and feel good that we've protected this insecure worker. But have we? Have we? Because they don't have the privilege that we do. Those employers who don't want to do things right can make sure that they don't have those privileges. That hurts us all.

It hurts our economy as well, because our economy, especially in the case of temporary foreign workers—they're in the Holland Marsh; they're also in Timiskaming-Cochrane. Why? Because as the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka said, in a lot of cases, we cannot find skilled workers to do the jobs that need to be done. In our case, in Timiskaming-Cochrane, a lot of the people who could work, who would be skilled at working in agriculture, can make more money working in a mine right now. And I don't blame them. If I was their age, I would be working in a mine as well. So we have to bring in workers to actually get the work done.

By far, the majority of our employers do a great job, but again, I'm not sure the help is out there to actually make sure that the employers who aren't doing a good job get reprimanded.

One part of this bill that I would have thought odd before I got this job: There's a part in there about how you can go after more than six months' wages. I'm thinking to myself, "Really?"—before I got this job, when I was an employer and before, when I worked on a farm—"Well, why would anybody work if they're not getting paid?" But again, if you're in a precarious position—and now that I'm an MPP, I deal with cases like this in my office. So it has changed my perspective incredibly. Hopefully, we can change a lot more people's perspective incredibly.

On the issue of jobs, just raising minimum wage isn't going to create jobs, and having had the pleasure of being here the whole afternoon, I've heard a couple of nice points. I've heard a couple of times that the minimum wage was frozen, and since this government has been in power, we went from the lowest minimum wage to the highest minimum wage. Congratulations. We also went from the lowest hydro costs to the highest hydro costs in the country. And if you're going to tell me that that's not true, then you tell me why the companies in my riding like Resolute Forest Products, like Xstrata in Timmins, just north of my riding—that ore is still being processed. It's being processed in Quebec, where the electricity costs are a lot cheaper.

If you're going to create jobs, let's talk about the real issues. Minimum wage is one of them. But if you're going to trumpet that the minimum wage is that much higher, let's look at everything that is that much higher.

Another issue is education. I've been listening this whole afternoon—and if you haven't figured it out yet, I don't have any notes. I'm kind of just going off the cuff, because I wasn't planning to speak today. The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka talked about a shop class.

We have in TDSS, Timiskaming District Secondary School, and I believe the Premier came to see it, a high school excellence class in agriculture; and it's a great program. Right where I live, it's primarily an agricultural area, and this gives students a crash course in stuff like how to change a bearing. Not too many people in this room could probably change a bearing, but those kids can, and that's a big part of agriculture. You can have a half-million dollar machine, but if a bearing goes, it's sitting there. If no one knows how to change it, it's sitting there. It's little things like that.

I want to go back to one thing, and I think it's really important: I find it an incredible privilege to be able to stand here and speak my mind on behalf of my colleagues, especially with this bill. We're talking about people who don't have that privilege. So we're going to have to find a way, when this bill goes to committee and when it passes, to actually make it work on the ground, because if we don't make legislation that works for people on the ground, we're never going to be as successful as we want to be.

1750

Good legislation and good legislators: It's more than putting out a fancy press release. I like the titles. Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act: great title. But it's more than just the title. It's about making programs that actually work.

I'm going to go back to the Minister of Northern Development. A program that actually works: tile drainage in northern Ontario. There is infrastructure—you want to talk about local food? You put tile drainage in the ground that will last for 100 years, and regardless of who farms that ground, it will make a huge difference. The people who don't have tile drainage in northern Ontario this year are not going to get a crop off. That's a great program. I'd like to commend the minister. I bet you he didn't think I was ever going to do that, but I'd like to commend the minister for really pushing that program. The farmers in Timiskaming-Cochrane have been pushing that for 20 years. That's the kind of program that makes a huge difference. That's infrastructure; that's bricks and mortar and tile.

But for this type of legislation to make a difference—I know I'm being repetitive, but it's an important point—it has got to make a difference to people on the street. It has got to make a difference to people in the Holland Marsh. It has got to make a difference to people in Timiskaming Shores right now, or in Evanturel township, who are milking cows. It has got to impact—it has got to be available to them. If we're successful at doing that, it will be a successful piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm glad to be given the opportunity to stand and add a few of my comments to this particular bill.

As it has been said around the chamber several times, this is a bill by the Minister of Labour. Some people seemed to comment that he combined two bills that were

before this Legislature before, and they're calling it an omnibus bill. But the interesting thing is that the minister is combining two of his own ministry's bills, and it's all related. So I kind of, when we look at that, take a little bit of—we're a government; we're here to serve the public. Here is an opportunity to get two pieces of legislation, that are important to that public out there, that has been vulnerable for a long time, resolved once and for all. I really hope that we don't spend too much time debating this bill.

I just want to make a comment about the minimum wage. In this bill, the government has done something that is extraordinary—I think it's a good thing, and it should be done in several other areas of government—which is to tie something to inflation, so then the public out there knows what's going to happen and when.

This is one of the situations where the minister went out and consulted with the business community and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. They came back and recommended that we do this with CPI. They recommended and supported the amount of minimum wage that we were proposing at the time. So in my mind, that's very progressive, because it has been done with consultation, it has been done with the workforce, it has been done with the business community, and they're all supportive of it.

I congratulate the minister for bringing forward a great bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's a pleasure to add some comments to the speech from the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

He was talking about the farming school, I believe, in his riding and how useful that is and how it's helping to develop skills. He gave the example of how to change a bearing. It made me think of my brother Ross, who was fresh out of high school and, asked by my father what he wanted to do, said he wanted to be a farmer. Then he ended up going to Guelph for a couple of years and learning from a farmer and buying a farm. He was a dairy farmer for 10 years.

I still recall all the skills he had to learn in that business of being a farmer—and he was 20 when he started—thinking of things like how to weld when the combine broke, and you're right in the middle of trying to harvest. Of course, I still remember having to drive him to the hospital because he didn't use the safety goggles when he did weld his combine back together, so perhaps the school would have been good for him for some of the skills you need—or how to deliver a calf, or how to fix various broken equipment when it would break right when you really needed it, and you had very little time to actually get the job done. There certainly is a huge variety of skills required.

Coming back to some of his other points, I certainly believe that, with most things that government does, there needs to be some flexibility for the inspectors, not in the case of safety necessarily, but in lots of other areas.

It's not all black and white; there are grey areas. You need some inspectors who have common sense and who are willing—and it should be the policy of the government to help educate employees, employers and businesses so they can meet the objectives of the government and not be so much about being the police.

I see I'm out of time in my comments. It was a pleasure to have a chance to say something.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**M. Taras Natyshak:** J'aimerais féliciter mon collègue ici, le député de Timiskaming-Cochrane, pour son discours ici cet après-midi. Je crois qu'il apporte une semblance, une mesure de raison et de balance avec ses idées. J'apprécie aussi qu'il nous rappelle que demain est la journée du fermier, qui est une industrie et une manière de vivre qui est très importante non seulement pour notre province mais aussi notre pays. Donc, j'apprécie qu'il nous rappelle ça. He brings a balance and some reason to debate every time I hear him speak, and today was certainly a measure of that.

Speaker, we are talking about a whole economy, and there is no portion, no quadrant of our province that isn't affected by any of the bills that we bring through this House. When he says that it should and must be effective in its delivery, that's what we're looking for, certainly, on this side of the House, something that responds to the problem at hand.

More so than ever, the mantra of “keeping up with the Joneses” is important for us to remember here. It has always been the goal: “Let's keep up with the Joneses”—meaning there's an average balance, a median standard that we can all strive for. I want to tell the government, these days, either through lack of policy effectiveness or otherwise, the Joneses are barely getting by. We must remember that initiatives through this House have to be effective in that regard. They have to keep focused on improving the livelihoods of the people of this province. That's what our job is.

It is our hope on this side, as New Democrats, that this piece of legislation does that. We certainly are looking forward to playing a role in making sure that it does.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** What a unique pleasure it is for me to rise for the third time today to talk on this bill. It's almost as if I've scored a hat trick today, and having done it all within one session, in hockey parlance that would be a natural hat trick, like I did it all in the same period. But I appreciate so much the member from Timiskaming's comments—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Come on over here. Get close enough, Gordie Howe style.

I appreciate very much the comments from the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, particularly your shout-out to the farmers across the province. I attended the Argo game against the Ticats at the beginning of



Agriculture Week two Fridays ago, and it was wonderful to be there with the hard-working men and women of this province who work very closely with the temporary foreign workers who come to help us bring in the crop every year. That is one of the items that's being so clearly addressed in this bill, assisting, because we don't want to be known as a province, internationally, that allows unreasonable seizures of the important documents of our workers who come over here.

Hats off to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, who happens to be the member for my mother's property up in the Dorset area—delighted to have you there representing us and helping us get that nursing station which we brought forward, which is coming forward.

And the member for Essex for his very informed comments, both in French and English, half of which I didn't really understand—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I couldn't find the earplug in time.

But I do want to again thank and remind the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane that the blitzes that we've done have actually been very, very effective, contrary to your thinking. When you do a blitz, it informs the ministry about how rampant a situation or the problems are. It allows us to do better education. It also provides notice to those employers who may not be doing the job right so they get it right next time. They have been successful. So we'll hope to be able to continue that. That's not a weakness in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane can reply now.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to thank the members from Scarborough–Rouge River, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Essex and Beaches–East York. Merci beaucoup.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It's 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

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Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
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Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
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Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

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**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature



**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 21 October 2014**

**Mardi 21 octobre 2014**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 21 October 2014

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 21 octobre 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning.

Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FIGHTING FRAUD

### AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Mr. Bradley, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / *Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy government House leader.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, the member from York South-Weston, and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, the member for Newmarket-Aurora, and I will be leaving the lion's share of the time for that. I'll offer a few remarks at the beginning but, obviously, the parliamentary assistants, on both of these occasions and both these instances, are individuals who have developed an expertise in this field and will be speaking on behalf of the government.

We agreed, you will remember, to reduce auto insurance rates by 15% on average by August 2015, and we're still on target to meet that particular goal. Since setting that goal last summer, we have seen rates stabilize and come down, on average, by about 6%. But of course, we believe that's not enough. There's more to be done, and we introduced legislation last spring that would work to achieve this plan. Unfortunately, the opposition forced an unnecessary election that froze our work, and that's why today we're here, working to pass this legislation again to

further fight fraud, reduce costs and lower rates for Ontario drivers.

I must say, in my time in this House, the issue of auto insurance in general has come to the attention of the Legislature on many occasions. It's usually when the premiums rise in a significant way that it gains the attention of the Legislature and ultimately, of course, the public, who will witness this happening to themselves and to others. That is why the government seized upon this as being a very significant issue early on, under the auspices, particularly, of the Minister of Finance, but we have two parliamentary assistants today who will look at it from different angles.

One of the things you recognize, Mr. Speaker—we have a different Speaker in the chair now, the member for Chatham and other areas in that area, Chatham-Kent and—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Essex.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:**—Essex, those three, is sitting in the chair in a very distinguished manner. I just wanted to let his constituents know that he was here and presiding at this particular point in time.

There is a saga to auto insurance in this province. I can recall, as I say, on many occasions—when new governments come in, they try to tackle these particular challenges, and have been somewhat successful over the years. There is a recognition that there's a relationship between the costs incurred and the premiums paid. The question always is, how much of that is significant in terms of the premiums rising?

I remember in 1990 being in this chamber and, with much fanfare, the NDP government of the day was sworn in for government. I knew number one in their platform, or at least very high in their platform, was public auto insurance. So I waited for those five years to see whether, in fact, there would be public auto insurance introduced in the province, because it had been promised for years. They said, "Well, the New Democratic Party, what are they about?" They're about public auto insurance.

But lo and behold, I think a very detailed analysis was done for the province of Ontario—because, remember, public auto insurance had been in place in other provinces. An analysis was done by the government of the day, who didn't want to break a promise. They weren't about breaking promises; they did not want to do it. But they took a very careful look at the circumstances that existed at that time and chose not to proceed with public auto insurance. That's a decision any government can make at any particular point in time. I noticed in the last



provincial election that the New Democratic Party did not promise public auto insurance.

I think we recognize that there's a challenge for people out there, and the purpose of this legislation is to deal with that particular challenge, a lot of it related to fraud. There are some towing circumstances that people have encountered over the years. They say there could be—and I think they are right—a reduction in costs if there were changes made in that regard and others, but I don't want to intrude too far into the speaking time of the two parliamentary assistants who are going to follow me at this time.

Suffice it to say, with some historical perspective, every government has tried to deal with this, and the circumstances change over the years; it's not one circumstance facing everyone. I'm going to recall a bit a circumstance when I was Minister of the Environment in 1985. There was an insurance crisis at that time. There had been some significant court cases—some of them had not actually completed, but they were court cases that came forward that scared everybody, to be quite honest about that, including municipalities. Even getting insurance was becoming a problem because the reinsurance business, the insurance companies that insure insurance companies, were at that time quite worried about the circumstances that existed. And here I was, as Minister of the Environment, trying to proclaim what was called the spills bill.

Now, the spills bill was a bill which dealt with environmental spills. It really put the onus on the spiller, if you will, to clean up and look after the problem immediately. Some said that it was reverse onus, and I guess it was to a certain extent, so it was controversial. It had passed under a minority Parliament, the minority Parliament between 1977 and 1981—I must say, by the way, Mr. Speaker, a minority Parliament that in my view worked very well. Unlike the last minority Parliament that we had, I thought the one between 1977 and 1981 worked well. Let me tell you why that was. Remember there was a minority Parliament between 1975 and 1977—very raucous, very disruptive; it worked enough, but there were a lot of challenges. People hadn't had experience with a minority Parliament for a long time. Mr. Davis called an election to gain a majority. He fell short of gaining that majority, so we were in a minority Parliament again.

0910

What happened on that occasion was that the government became much more responsive to the opposition, and the opposition became more responsible in terms of what it was doing. So I thought in that period of time—and I want to give Mr. Davis, who I know will be watching from his home in Brampton at this time or his office in Brampton, some considerable credit for the way—and Bob Welch, by the way, who was a House leader. I want to give them credit for the manner in which they operated the minority Parliament at that time. I want to give credit as well to all the House leaders who worked together to make Parliament work. There were actually a lot of bills

that were passed on that particular occasion. So that's the context.

Now we are into a majority Parliament again. The people of Ontario have made a decision. We have a majority Parliament, and we're now able to deal with a piece of legislation we just couldn't get moving in a minority Parliament. In fact, in the last minority Parliament, it was hard to move any legislation through, which was unfortunate. Then we ended up with an election that I'm sure the member for Renfrew did not want, but there we were, in an election. His leader and others—the hawks, as we call them—had been calling for an election. The New Democratic Party pulled the plug, and we were thrust into an election that I don't think many people in the province wanted, but they did make a decision.

Now we're before this House with a piece of legislation which I think will have—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Yes—a piece of legislation which I think will go a long way to meeting the challenges that we face in auto insurance.

Having said this, I now turn it over to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance or the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, whichever one gets up and you recognize.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Colle:** York South–Weston.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. I would thank the minister for his history lesson.

I would now recognize the member from York South–Weston.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be sharing my time with the member from Newmarket–Aurora and also the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, who I believe would like to add something to the second reading of Bill 15.

I am very honoured to rise today for second reading of Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014. This legislation proposes a number of much-needed measures to help protect Ontario drivers, tackle fraud and abuse, and reduce costs and uncertainty in Ontario's auto insurance system. If passed, Bill 15 will build on the work done to date to stabilize and bring down auto insurance rates, including the substantial 2010 reforms that streamlined the system, gave consumers more choice in their auto insurance policies and cracked down on fraud and abuse.

There are more than nine million drivers in Ontario. Some of these drivers are still paying too much for auto insurance. I'm sure that, as members of this Legislature, we all hear that in our constituencies from time to time. Our government made a commitment to making auto insurance more affordable while keeping the system fair and reliable. Bill 15 would make good on that commitment and help bring down average rates for Ontario drivers.

In August 2013, we announced our Auto Insurance Cost and Rate Reduction Strategy. We're targeting an average 15% reduction in auto insurance rates over two

years. How are we working to achieve that target? A key element of our strategy is to bring down costs in the system and reduce uncertainty. Auto insurance rates are directly linked to claim costs. Every dollar paid out in auto insurance claims is funded by policyholders, so if we reduce the costs, we can help reduce the rates.

One significant cost driver in the auto insurance system is fraud. Recognizing this, in July 2011 the government formed the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force based on a commitment made in the 2011 Ontario budget. The task force was created to bring together stakeholders and government to collaboratively review the issues and recommend some solutions.

In 2012, the task force issued its final report. It found that auto insurance fraud is indeed substantial and has a material impact on premiums. Research conducted on the task force's behalf estimated that in 2010, costs related to auto insurance fraud amounted to between \$770 million and \$1.6 billion. So tackling fraud and working to reduce it has been an ongoing priority for our government.

The task force made 38 recommendations to combat auto insurance fraud. So far we have taken action to address more than half of these, and we're committed to addressing the remaining recommendations over the coming months. Bill 15 contains important measures that would not only continue our crackdown on fraud, but would also address other critical issues in the auto insurance system to help reduce costs and uncertainty, and ultimately rates, for Ontario drivers.

Mr. Speaker, our cost and rate reduction strategy is working. From August 2013 to August 2014, auto insurance rates dropped by an average of over 6%. While we're pleased with this reduction, we recognize that we still have a ways to go to reach our 15% target.

If passed, Bill 15 would help us get there. The measures being proposed by this legislation include transforming the auto insurance dispute resolution system to make it more efficient and effective, and discourage fraud and abuse. The legislation would propose consumer protection to towing and vehicle storage industries through measures that tackle questionable business practices, and provide authority to address vehicle storage and related issues identified by the anti-fraud task force.

In addition, the amendments proposed provide new enforcement tools, such as allowing inspectors to issue orders where violations are found. I believe that's very important. Bill 15 would also modernize insurance agent and adjuster disciplinary hearings, which would protect consumers and build on past changes to enhance the regulator's investigation and enforcement authority. As you can see, this proposed legislation is comprehensive in its approach to fighting fraud and abuse, improving consumer protection and strengthening Ontario's auto insurance system.

The proposed Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014, is a combination of two pieces of legislation that died on the order paper when the 40th Parliament of Ontario was dissolved: the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance

Rates Act, 2014, originally introduced on March 4, 2014, and the Roadside Assistance Protection Act, 2014, originally introduced on April 15, 2014. The measures included in these two bills are so vital to helping to protect Ontario drivers and fighting fraud in the auto insurance system that we simply had to reintroduce them.

I'd now like to provide some details about these measures and outline why it is important that Bill 15 has all of our support. Since 1990, mediation has been a mandatory first step for disputes between claimants and auto insurers over the entitlement to, or amount of, statutory accident benefits. The dispute resolution system, or DRS, as it's also known, was intended to help drivers and insurers resolve disputes quickly so that injured drivers got the health treatments they needed to get better. This system was administered by the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, also known as FSCO.

However, in recent years, the system became overwhelmed and bogged down with applications. There are major backlogs that created uncertainty and elevated costs. On top of everything, injured drivers were waiting too long to get the benefits they needed.

We are proposing to change the DRS to help injured Ontario drivers settle disputes faster.

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Last year, we appointed the Honourable J. Douglas Cunningham, a former Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, to review the system and provide us with recommendations on how to make improvements. There was an extensive consultation process, which included input from 35 stakeholders, written submissions, in-person meetings, as well as an interim report.

The final report was delivered on February 18 and made 28 recommendations to transform the DRS so that it operates more efficiently and effectively, which would reduce consumer frustration, uncertainty and costs. Bill 15 is proposing to implement a number of these recommendations.

If passed, Bill 15 would create a new framework for the DRS by moving responsibility to an existing tribunal administered by the Ministry of the Attorney General, which would be the Licence Appeal Tribunal. The objective is to establish a more expedient, efficient and cost-effective system. The move would also remove adjudicative functions regarding statutory accident benefits from FSCO to prevent conflicts in its role as the regulator of insurance companies. This is an important step. The resulting reduction in costs and uncertainty would lead to more long-term stability in claim costs, which would ultimately lower rates. More importantly, it would provide claimants with faster access to the benefits they require.

Drivers involved in traffic collisions or in need of roadside assistance should have the confidence that the tow truck driver helping them will do the work safely. If passed, Bill 15 would help us achieve this important goal. We're proposing consumer protections to address the towing and vehicle storage industries, a key measure that was recommended by the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud



Task Force. The changes that we're proposing would, if passed, help Ontario drivers make informed decisions when getting their vehicle towed or having it held in a storage facility.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed legislation and supporting regulations, in due course, would require tow and storage providers to get authorization from the consumer, or someone acting on behalf of the consumer, before charging for towing and storage services. Tow and storage providers would also be required to make their rates available publicly. They would also have to accept payments by credit card from consumers, and, before demanding or receiving payment, tow and storage providers would have to provide an invoice, including an itemized list of the services provided and the total cost. Finally, in most cases, consumers would have access to their towed vehicle to remove any property contained in the vehicle. These proposed changes were developed through extensive consultations with stakeholders held earlier this year.

In January and February, 2014, representatives from the municipal, policing, towing, insurance, vehicle financing and leasing, and other sectors met to consult on the oversight of the towing and storage industries. The group worked together to develop recommendations to government which we are now proposing in Bill 15.

But that's not all, Mr. Speaker. We are also proposing to amend the Highway Traffic Act to include tow trucks in the province's existing commercial vehicle operator's registration system. The new legislation would allow us to set qualifications and standards governing the operation and the use of tow trucks, including driver certification and training requirements, and prescribe penalties to violators. This would help improve road safety through monitoring and enforcement, another important consumer protection measure.

Another way that we are helping to protect drivers is by proposing to provide authority to reduce the number of days a vehicle can be stored after an accident without giving notice to the owner and other persons where required. Regulations could also provide for the determination of fair value of storage where an amount has not been agreed upon.

Currently, when a vehicle has been damaged in an accident, it may be brought to a storage facility after the collision by someone other than the owner, or without the owner's authority. Those who store vehicles after accidents can begin charging for storage services right away, even though the owner of the vehicle may be unaware of where their car is located and that it is accumulating charges every day. Storers can hold a vehicle and accumulate storage charges for up to 60 days without giving any notice and then still claim a lien for the storage costs. The Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force noted that storers can maximize their lien by delaying notice until the 60-day period has almost expired, and the vehicle's owner or insurer may be liable for these inflated costs. So reducing the 60-day time period would cut down on abusive practices by some storers and would re-

move the associated costs from the auto insurance system. If passed, the proposed amendments would help address another of the task force's recommendations. I believe this is a very important one that really needs to be passed as quickly as possible.

Another measure proposed by Bill 15 is to modernize the system for insurance agent and adjuster disciplinary hearings. Streamlining the disciplinary process would support quicker regulatory action against agents and adjusters who are engaging in cost-generating deceptive and often fraudulent actions. For example, one insurance agent who had their licence revoked was caught using insurance company funds to cover their own business expenses. This is unacceptable. If passed, FSCO would have the authority to revoke or immediately suspend the licences of agents and adjusters who act improperly and put the public at risk. Bill 15 would also align the process for these disciplinary hearings with modern principles of procedural fairness, including replacing the 90-year-old advisory board system with the existing Financial Services Tribunal. If passed, these amendments would help combat fraud and protect consumers by building on previous changes Ontario has made to expand and modernize FSCO's investigation and enforcement authority, particularly in the area of fraud prevention. These are much-needed measures that would help protect Ontario consumers.

Because auto insurance fraud is so prevalent and costly, we're tackling it from many sides. In addition to the measures being proposed in Bill 15, our government has committed to establishing a serious fraud unit whose mandate will include addressing auto insurance fraud. Automobile insurance fraud is part of a wider issue of white-collar crime that costs Ontario citizens, companies and financial institutions hundreds of millions of dollars each year. A special unit with a mandate to tackle serious fraud, including auto insurance fraud, will support the key principle established by the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force that fraudsters should be vigorously pursued and prosecuted where warranted.

Bill 15 also proposes a long-overdue measure that will help modernize the auto insurance system. If passed, this legislation would amend the Insurance Act to align the prejudgment interest rate for non-pecuniary loss, also called pain and suffering damages, for individuals injured in a motor vehicle collision to reflect market conditions. The current prejudgment interest rate on damages for non-pecuniary loss in a personal injury action is set at 5% per year. Meanwhile, the prejudgment interest rate for most other damages is based on Bank of Canada interest rates and calculated quarterly. Currently this rate is 1.3% per year. The 5%-per-year prejudgment interest rate for damages for non-pecuniary loss in a personal injury action increases the cost of bodily injury claims in the auto insurance system, which drives up costs for all consumers. This rate has not been adjusted since 1990. Linking this rate to current market conditions would help reduce the cost of bodily injury claims in the auto insurance system while still ensuring fairness to consumers.

In conclusion, as I have outlined, Bill 15 would bring much-needed changes to Ontario's auto insurance system. It is the next step in our commitment to keeping the system fair and affordable for Ontario drivers. That is why I ask for the support of the House in passing this act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member for York South–Weston for her contribution to debate.

I now recognize the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**0930**  
**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The deputy government House leader reminded me of the early days when the NDP were elected. I was the executive director of the Consumers' Association of Canada here in Ontario, with 60,000 members. Auto insurance was always top of mind for us because we heard consistently from our members and from others just how important it was to them. So he takes me back a few years.

It's a great privilege then for me to rise in the House today to tell you about the steps our government is proposing to address concerns in the towing and vehicle storage industry for the over nine million drivers in this province.

The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has been working closely with our colleagues in two other ministries—the Ministry of Finance, under the leadership of Minister Sousa, and the Ministry of Transportation, under the leadership of Minister Del Duca—to develop proposed changes to the laws currently governing these industries, which are before you today.

Proposing strong consumer protection and public safety measures specific to the towing and vehicle storage industries is an important initiative that will help the people of Ontario in three critical ways. If these legislative changes are passed, they will help strengthen consumer protection, improve road user safety and reduce automobile insurance fraud.

Most of the tow truck and vehicle storage operators in Ontario provide top-notch service to their customers and contribute to keeping our roads free and clear by removing vehicles, including those involved in collisions, quickly, efficiently and safely. However, some towing and storage operators simply do not meet the standards expected of them. Serious concerns have been raised about some operators in the industry by consumers and by the Insurance Bureau of Canada, among others. We know, for example, that some tow truck drivers charge exorbitant rates, leaving vulnerable accident victims shocked and distressed. We know, for example, and many of us have heard stories of people going to pick up vehicles from storage lots, only to find they've been asked to pay unexpectedly large amounts of money before their vehicles are released.

It's worth noting that from a road safety perspective, tow truck drivers also have very high collision rates, caused in part by aggressive driving when they try to get

to a collision scene first. According to the Ontario road safety report, tow trucks in Ontario had a 19.7% collision rate in 2010. That's compared to 1.1% for other commercial vehicles and 3.3% for private passenger vehicles. Drivers involved in traffic collisions or in need of roadside assistance should have the confidence that the tow truck driver helping them will do their work safely and fairly. If passed, Bill 15 would help us achieve this important goal.

We're proposing consumer protection to address the towing and vehicle storage industries, which is in keeping with recommendations of the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force and this ministry's towing and storage advisory group. The changes we're proposing would, if passed, help Ontario drivers make informed decisions when getting their vehicle towed or having it held in a storage facility. The proposed legislation and supporting regulations would require tow and storage providers to get authorization from the consumer or someone acting on behalf of the consumer before charging for towing and storage services. Tow and storage providers would also be required to make their rates available publicly. They would also have to accept alternative forms of payment to cash, such as by credit card or debit card, from consumers, and before demanding or receiving payment, tow and storage providers would have to provide an invoice, including an itemized list of the services provided and the total cost. Finally, consumers would generally have access to their towed vehicle to remove any personal property contained in the vehicle.

These proposed changes were developed through extensive consultation with stakeholders held earlier this year. In January and February, 2014, representatives from the municipal, policing, towing, vehicle finance and leasing, insurance, and other sectors met to consult on the oversight of the towing and storage industries. The group worked collaboratively to develop recommendations to government, which we're now proposing in Bill 15, but that's not all. We're also proposing to amend the Highway Traffic Act to include tow trucks in the province's existing commercial vehicle operator's registration system. The new legislation would allow us to set qualifications and standards governing the operation and use of tow trucks, such as driver certification and training recommendations. This would help improve road safety through monitoring and enforcement, another important consumer protection measure.

Another way we're helping to protect drivers is by proposing to provide authority to reduce the number of days a vehicle can be stored after an accident without giving notice to the owner and other persons where required. Regulations can also provide for the determination of fair value of storage where an amount has not been agreed to.

Currently, when a vehicle has been damaged in an accident, for example, it may be brought to a storage facility after the collision by someone other than the owner or without the owner's authority. Those who store vehicles can begin charging for storage service right away, even



though the owner of the vehicle may be unaware of where their car is located and that it's accumulating charges every day.

Storers can hold a vehicle and accumulate storage charges for up to 60 days without giving any notice, and then still claim a lien for the storage costs. The Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force noted that storers can maximize their lien by delaying notice until the 60-day period has almost expired and the vehicle's owner or insurer may be liable for inflated costs. Reducing the 60-day time period would cut down on abusive practices by some storers and would remove some of the associated costs from the auto insurance system. If passed, Bill 15 would extend invaluable protection to those whose automobiles are towed and stored.

Because auto insurance fraud is so prevalent and costly, we're tackling it from many sides, as the member who spoke before me outlined. In Ontario, we want drivers involved in traffic collisions or in need of roadside assistance to have the confidence that the tow truck driver helping them is qualified and will do the work safely and fairly, and we're committed to working with the towing and vehicle storage industries in Ontario to help make that happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rest of my time, I will allow my colleague to carry on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora. We'll continue debate with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back. I'm sure it was a wonderful summer in Chatham, with all the festivals you were going to, and I'm sure there are fall festivals going on now in Chatham–Kent.

I just want to follow up with my colleagues, the minister—Mr. Bradley from St. Catharines—the member from York South–Weston and the member from Barrie, on their comments on this very important issue of auto insurance. Mr. Speaker, as you know, auto insurance is really a necessity of life for all Ontarians. We all have to have an automobile, a safe automobile, and we all have to have some insurance because of the possibility of something occurring when you're driving your car, so we don't have much choice. It's not a matter of choice, it's a matter of prerogative; we have to have our vehicles and we have to have auto insurance.

I have been involved over the years with this interesting topic. I go back quite a number of years with auto insurance. Over the years, I've learned a lot by talking to a lot of the people on the ground, whether they be insurance brokers, whether they be auto body repair shop operators, tow truck drivers, insurance agents, people who are in the medical side of insurance or people in our government here, experts like Phil Howell, who is the director of the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, FSCO. There's a lot that you learn.

The thing I learned most is that this is a most complex series of issues. Sometimes we do more harm than good when we think there's a quick fix or a silver bullet:

"Reduce my rates and I don't care about anything else." But as you know, the consequence sometimes is that you may not get the coverage you need if you happen to be in an accident. You may not get the repair to your vehicle or the compensation you may require if, God forbid, something happens to you or one of your loved ones in an accident.

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That's why it's not just a matter of, "Just lower my rates and I don't care what the consequences are." There are consequences with everything you do in this industry. It is extremely complex because it's not just about the insurance companies. It's not just about the insurance brokers or the government at FSCO. The insurance industries, as I call them, are made up of many component parts.

Insurance in Ontario involves the tow truck industry. Those are the vehicles that tow people on a regular basis who have been in an accident. It involves the legal community—the paralegals who are expert in certain areas of law and who are very involved in auto insurance. Then, the lawyers. There are all kinds of lawyers involved in the insurance industry. If you look at the ads on TV—the slip-and-fall lawyers. They're advertising like crazy: "If you get in an accident, call us." If you go to some parts of Ontario, you see big billboards: "If you get in an accident, call us." In many cases, they do some good work, but in many cases, there are people, sometimes, in the past, who have taken advantage of people in car accidents.

I spent some time at the TTC, and on a regular basis the TTC deals with fraudulent insurance claims—almost on a daily basis. I know that my fellow members from Scarborough remember this. There was a bus full of people—I think it was on Lawrence Avenue in Scarborough, on a Sunday night, which is quite unusual. You don't usually see a bus full of people in Scarborough on Lawrence Avenue. Somehow this bus full of people rear-ended a truck in front of them—Sunday night at about 8 o'clock.

Everybody on the bus sued the TTC. I remember the TTC lawyer at the time—an excellent lawyer. He decided to challenge this, because he said, "It's quite unusual to have a bus full of people all suing us for whiplash on a Sunday night in Scarborough." In their investigation, they found that this was a staged accident. The guy driving the truck in front of the bus stopped abruptly so that the bus ran into the rear of the truck. The driver of the truck was being paid off by some fraud artists. Everybody on the bus who sued the TTC for whiplash got 500 bucks from the person who set up the staged accident. But this took the TTC about five years of legal manoeuvring and legal costs to deal with this one staged accident.

I use this as an example of the type of thing you're dealing with with insurance and vehicle accidents as to what could happen. And the repercussions? People say, "It's just the TTC; they can pay. It's just the insurance company; they can pay." But as you know, we all pay.

This type of organized fraud forces all of our premiums to go up. Sure, the insurance company will pass it on to us in higher premiums and they'll pass it onto our companies and insurers etc. So everybody pays for these fraud artists. There isn't some nameless insurance company that pays for all this; we pay through our premiums.

There are the people in the auto body repair industry—it's a huge industry in Ontario: people who repair cars and trucks. They're involved in insurance. It's a multi-million dollar industry that employs thousands of people. They're in the insurance business.

Then there's the whole massage industry. I don't know if you're aware of this, but there are all kinds of people employed in massaging people who get into accidents. There are some very professional massage therapists; there are some that are not professional. At one time, there were people from organized crime who were buying these massage spas treating people in automobile accidents. They would drive you to the massage spa in their limos. They had some interesting people doing massages on you. This was all paid by the insurance company and run by organized crime, with a small O.

Then you have the physiotherapists. Thousands of physiotherapists are involved in treating people who are victims of automobile accidents. The majority of them are very legitimate, excellent, well-trained, serious people, but then there are other people who are dubious physiotherapists who don't really have their licences, and they operate these so-called physiotherapy offices.

The medical community: There are many physicians who are involved in the insurance industry. They do medical assessments of people who are victims of accidents. What happens is, doctors do assessments. Then other doctors for the insurance companies do assessments. Then doctors for the accident victims do assessments. So they might do 10 assessments for one minor car accident. There are many medical doctors involved in the insurance industry.

Lawyers, as I said: There are thousands of lawyers involved in the insurance industry. There are also the insurance brokers, who are people that represent individuals who take out insurance from an insurance company. They are your representatives. When you want to buy insurance or you have an accident, they act as your advocate.

There's another part of insurance where you don't need a broker. They're called direct insurers. You just deal with the company directly. You don't have an agent or a broker; you deal directly. That's another complex part of insurance: the direct insurers, as opposed to the ones who work with brokers.

These are multiple layers of industries that employ tens of thousands of people in this thing called auto insurance. When you talk about auto insurance, it is not just about dealing with an insurance company and how they operate, or just dealing with the legal system, or not just dealing with the Financial Services Commission of Ontario. There are a dozen industries within the insur-

ance industry. So when this government has tried to basically manage and improve this industry and make it fairer, more transparent, it is not an easy task.

As the member from Barrie said, just dealing with the tow truck industry itself is very, very complex. The majority of tow truck operators are very legitimate people, experienced truckers. They have good track records. But then there are the other so-called tow truck operators. They will show up at an accident. As soon as the accident occurs—bang—they're there on the spot. They say, "Don't say anything. Don't do anything. We'll take your car to fix it. We've got a lawyer for you. We've got a doctor for you. We've got an insurance company for you."

The tow truck operator is the first entry point for insurance. They show up on the scene. A poor person is traumatized by the accident, so this tow truck driver becomes their advocate on the scene. Away goes their vehicle. In some cases, that vehicle may never be seen again, because once you give away that vehicle, they can keep it for 60 days.

In fact, here's an example. I know that in my own community, there is an auto body repair shop owned by this guy named Rocky. Across the street is a Mazda dealer, right on Dufferin. There's a Mazda dealer and Rocky's auto body repair shop.

A customer comes in to Rocky and says, "I just got in an accident, and my new car is across the street at the Mazda dealer." Rocky phones up the Mazda dealer and says, "Listen, I've got the customer here. He's the owner of that car. He wants me to repair the car."

The dealer said to him, or somebody in the dealership said, "Well, if you want the car, it will cost you 2,000 bucks." Rocky said, "Two thousand bucks?" "Yeah, there's an administration fee. Two thousand bucks."

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The car was driveable, Rocky said. You could just bring the car across the street from the dealership to Rocky's and have it repaired. "No, we won't release the car." But the owner called the dealer and said, "Release my car." He said, "No, 2,000 bucks, because we brought the car here to our shop. We had to do all this work to drive it here and drop it off. We had to do all this paperwork. Two thousand bucks or you don't get the car." Then the guy said, "Well, it doesn't matter. The insurance company will pay for this."

So in order to get the car over to the auto body repair shop of choice, which was the owner of the vehicle's choice, they had to pay \$2,000 to the guy across the street to release the car, to take the ransom. That's what it is, it's pure ransom.

Now, that's one example, Mr. Speaker. This has been going on by the tens of millions of dollars across Ontario for years, where these vehicles have been taken from accident scenes, held to ransom and the owner can't get it, your auto body repair shop can't get it. So that's why we are now trying to get rid of this hostage-taking of vehicles in accidents with this bill. That's one aspect of trying to provide for rules for tow truck operators. It's the



Wild West out there. There are many good ones, but as I said, there are some that are just exploitive. That's why we need this kind of legislation to help ensure that these added layers of costs are removed from the system, because if we continue to have this kind of hostage-taking of vehicles, if we continue to have this attitude of "Well, the insurance company is paying for it"—it doesn't matter whether somebody's committing fraud, it doesn't matter whether somebody is taking you to a physiotherapist in a limo, we have to get rid of this approach.

Now, it doesn't mean that getting rid of all this fraud is the only answer and is going to be the magic solution to making auto insurance fair in Ontario. My main point is that there are many other aspects to it, because I guess four and a half million drivers—maybe I've lost track of that, but there are just so many people driving, so many insurance companies, agents and all these other industries related. This bill attempts to come to grips with the reality of the auto insurance industry and to make it more transparent, more reasonable, an attempt to bring down rates, but it is not going to be the magic elixir. There is a lot of work to be done, and it's going to be a continuing amount of work with everybody in partnership.

As drivers, we have to understand that we have a responsibility and we can't continue to have that attitude of "Well, the insurance is paying." You know, whether you're in the auto body repair business or a tow truck business or the legal profession or all these others—the paralegals, the massage industry—we have to say that we all have to do our part and government has to do their part to undertake this serious, comprehensive partnership in making auto insurance fair and available to everybody, because you cannot drive in Ontario without it.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, because of higher rates, there are probably a lot of people driving without insurance. You talk to your police friends and they'll tell you how many people they stop on a regular basis who don't have insurance. You're probably young enough to remember, Mr. Speaker, when we used to have that \$25 thing we used to pay for liability back in the old days, so everybody got at least some kind of protection from being hit by someone without insurance. But nowadays, again, there are a lot of people driving without insurance that we have to do something about, too. That's why we need to make insurance affordable, fair and available in all parts of the province, because this problem of fraud, it's sad to say—it isn't everywhere in the province. It's maybe not a serious issue in Chatham-Kent and the good people there and Merlin and those places; there are a lot of good people there. But it is a serious problem in the GTA. It seems to be, sad to say, where a lot of this untoward activity is taking place. Maybe it's the critical mass of people that are here.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the other question I'm sure you've asked yourself is, with all these safety devices in cars—you know, we've got cars that can see from the inside lane the outside lane. They've got sensors on them. They've got the anti-lock brakes; they've got the anti-

skid mechanisms; they've got cameras out the back, the side, the incredibly good tires and the bumpers. Yet despite all these safety devices, the cost of accidents is going up and up and up. People are claiming more injuries from accidents than ever before, despite all these safety devices. And remember, one of the most important things, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, being an avid driver yourself, is the airbags. How many airbags? They've got 10, 20, 30 airbags in cars now. How can anybody get hurt with 10, 20, 30 airbags? But they are getting hurt and they are claiming injuries to their insurance company. So we've got all these safety features and yet the costs and the number of injuries are going up.

In Ontario, the cost of a claim compared to Alberta, for instance, is almost twice as much—just taking an approximation on that. So if you get in an accident, the same accident in Ontario costs twice as much to pay for that claim as it does in Alberta. Same cars, same good Canadians, yet our claims in Ontario are so expensive. Why? Why?

The other thing I wanted to mention, too, is that in insurance, at one time there used to be—well, there still is—a place for people who have many accidents. If you've got multiple accidents, you have to go into, like, insurance purgatory. I can't remember the name of the place now, but—

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Facility.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Facility, yes. I remember that at one time we had thousands of people in Facility, because what the insurance companies would do—if you were in a couple of accidents, they didn't want to insure you, because the insurance companies want to pick the people that are lowest risk. So they would say to you, "We don't want you. Go over to Facility." But in Facility, instead of paying \$5,000 a year or \$2,000 a year—you might pay \$10,000 a year for your insurance in Facility. Facility was filled with people, because the insurance companies didn't want to cover all these people who were in accidents.

One good thing is that the number of people in Facility has been reduced dramatically. Where before there were thousands in Facility, now there's hardly any. That's one good thing, because all the insurance companies are supposed to take reasonable people as customers.

As they say, not all insurance companies are the same. Like I said at the beginning, you can go through a direct insurer where you just get on the phone with someone and they insure you directly with an insurance company, or you can go to your friendly local broker, so that person is your advocate. That's why I always tell people—insurance is a very complicated thing but a very important thing. So if you're going to get insurance for your kids, if you're going to get insurance for your partner, it's important to go and talk to someone who knows something about insurance and do some research. Don't just get the lowest price. You pay for what you get. Now, you may get the lowest price and a great deal—that's very possible—but you can't do it by just reading an ad on the back of a bus or something. You have to do your research

as a consumer, and we as a government have to be doing more to protect consumers so they don't get taken advantage of and we educate them.

The other thing I would mention that is coming and that I think is a very positive thing in insurance is telematics. This is going to be really helpful to young drivers and new drivers because, as you know, when you're a new driver, it doesn't matter whether you're the 17-year-old just getting their licence or whether you're a newcomer to Canada from Scotland or something: You pay a very high rate as a new driver because you have no Ontario experience.

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What is happening technologically is, there are these telematics systems coming into place where there's a little device in your vehicle that can record how fast you drive, what kind of stops—are you doing those drag-racing takeoffs and so forth? What time of day do you drive? I know that some parents of young teenagers really love this system of telematics because they want to know how their son or daughter is driving. You can say to them, “Well, son, I trust you with the car. Here's the car. Go out there and don't speed. Be very careful. I don't want you driving around midnight; just drive when you have to go to work.” You can have that recorded through this telematics system that's available from companies now here in Ontario, all over North America and in England, where it started. That's going to be a way of saying to young drivers, “Listen, the recording of your driving habits and patterns will be given to the insurance company on a regular basis. They can see if you are driving at a safe rate of speed, what time you're driving etc., and because of that, we can give you a lower rate.”

If they notice in the digital reporting that you are speeding constantly, they give you a warning; in fact, they text you because it's usually for young people. They text and say, “Johnny, in the last week, you've been going over the speed limit constantly. Johnny, if you don't stop that, your rate is going to go up.” So they give them a warning. Then if Johnny keeps speeding, they will then see that rate go up, and dad will say, “Johnny, look, I've got to pay another 200 bucks a month for your insurance.” For young people, it can be very, very difficult and expensive to drive a vehicle and get insured.

So this telematics system that's becoming more and more in vogue in Ontario, as it has been all over North America and England, will be a feature that will encourage young people and new drivers to drive safer and, at the same time, be able to be used as a tool to reduce rates. So that's a good thing that's coming through technology.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that all these aspects of insurance that I've talked about, I hope, reinforce the point that I made at the beginning: It is a very complex system. We need everybody working together to bring down rates, to make insurance more transparent, to make it more beneficial for the insured and to make it, again, more understandable.

This Bill 15 takes on a lot of hard, challenging issues. As I said, it is a bill that tries to solve some of these

problems. We can't expect everything that this bill purports to do will come out in perfection, but it is an extremely thoughtful, well-researched attempt at solving some of these problems. There have been a lot of stakeholder meetings. There's been a lot of input. They had the task force that met. All partners in insurance have tried to participate in bringing about some needed remedies to make auto insurance better, more available and more transparent for all Ontarians who need to drive, need to have insurance.

Again, I encourage everyone to take a good look at this bill. I think it's a bill that's worth supporting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** This bill is a continuation of a century-long drama when it comes to auto insurance in Ontario. It seems that, from time to time, auto insurance becomes a trendy concern, and we come out with some legislation. This has resulted in lots of bureaucracy and lots of legislation piled on top of one another. It's making the system too complicated and, in the end, very costly. In fact, we now have the highest auto insurance rates in our country.

It's important to note that we've heard from stakeholders, including advocates for accident victims, who have concerns about this bill, and there are concerns around the aspects of the legislation related to the changes affecting the towing industry. I think it's important to listen to those concerns to see if there are improvements we can make to this bill in committee and to address those.

This bill essentially merges Bills 171 and 189 from the previous Parliament. It addresses five priority areas relating to auto insurance in Ontario. The Liberals are touting this bill as part of their cost reduction strategy intended to help deliver 15% in savings to drivers, which we all know they have been failing at. Overall, the bill is a big step forward, but there are very few significant cost savings that will be achieved by this bill.

On the whole, it is supported by the insurance industry because they consider it a step in the right direction. So tomorrow, when we do our party's leadoff hour-long discussion, we'll get into the amendments that we specifically feel we should be making which will help make this bill a truer, better bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Nipissing. I now recognize the member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Speaker. Our party is certainly committed to a 15% decrease in auto insurance, but the cheapest way to decrease it is to not have an accident in the first place.

I want to tell the story of Tom Price from my riding, who wrote to me last night. He says:

“I was involved with a very dangerous situation on Friday, October 17 ... that you should be aware of. The situation happened on city road 4 that leads into the Fairbanks area and the Fairbanks park. The road out of



the area is the only operational access to the area. Chicago Mine Road has been closed to ... traffic most of the summer and remains closed due to a washed out bridge that has not been repaired. Any assistance or advice ... would be ... appreciated...."

Here's his story. He says:

"Michael Vagnini and I spent some time this morning in an area of flooding on Fairbanks Lake Road"—that's regional road 4—"just north of Worthington where the road was flooded. The situation was life threatening for anyone in a vehicle smaller than a pickup truck and there were numerous tandem trucks with trailers passing through the area making it even more dangerous. Potholes in the road below the surface of the water were deep enough to cause my 4 wheel drive to hit the frame on two occasions and one trucker indicated that the front wheel of his tandem had dropped in a hole that reached the front axle. A lady with a toddler passed through the area at high risk as did an elderly lady who came close to nose diving into the ditch while we were there. Fortunately neither vehicle hit the potholes that I had or ... the trucker was talking about. Had either vehicle gone into the ditch the current was so rapid and the ditch so deep as to preclude any attempts at rescue and they would have perished."

I don't wish any harm about anybody, but when the status of our roads is so despicable, accidents are just a matter of time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? The member from—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Scarborough—Rouge River.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you very much. Member?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to just add a few comments, probably in the same line as those from my colleague from Eglinton—Lawrence. In the accident claim area, especially the medical benefits claim area, it has been a big problem. In the tow truck industry, it has been a big problem.

I just want to share with you that I was a municipal councillor elected to the amalgamated city in 1997. In 1998 we decided to tackle the tow truck industry in the city of Toronto. I will tell you that I got corralled by tow trucks on the highway. I got threatened. It is a goon industry, if I can call it that way. The reason I think it is that way is because a lot of these tow trucks are licensed by municipalities. No two municipalities have the same set of rules.

I think the government is going in the right direction to try and bring it all under one roof. It's the same with the medical claims business—to try to centralize it and screen it so that the fraud will stop, because I know tow trucks operate with body shops; body shops operate with the physiotherapy place; they operate with the chiropractor. In my own riding, and my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt's, we probably pay 20% more in insurance because our area has been hit with a lot of these claims.

I support this bill; I think we should move it forward, but I want to say one warning to all of us: This industry is

so big and there are so many small issues all over the place that this bill is not going to be the be-all and end-all. We're going to have to keep looking at this industry. Some of us may have to get foot soldiers out on the front lines to actually understand the fraudsters. Until you understand the fraudsters, you cannot close the loopholes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough—Rouge River. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I just want to get a couple of quick points in regarding Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. As we know—and the member from Nipissing explained this already—this is a bill from a past Legislature and a past Parliament, brought together to be reintroduced. I just wanted to get on the record that when this bill gets to committee, I urge the government to listen to the stakeholders, to strengthen this bill. We've heard several concerns from stakeholders, including advocates for accident victims, and of course to concerns relating to the changes affecting the tow truck industry. I would urge the government to listen at committee to the public and stakeholder input on Bill 15 so we can strengthen this bill and make it more effective for the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Response from the minister of—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Chair of Cabinet.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. The Chair of Cabinet, Minister without Portfolio and member from St. Catharines.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Thank you very much. The initial discussion has been very good. The government has laid out why it has come forward with some of these responses to a problem that has been out there for years. I think the member for Nipissing mentioned, for instance, that this is something that comes up time and again with each government. We try to find new solutions to it. This bill provides some of those solutions, we believe, that go a long way to, first of all, eliminating fraud and other activities that drive up the rates, but second, it will have the effect of bringing premium increases—the rates that people have to pay for insurance—down.

We should recognize that we always have to keep looking at how things evolve. I would suspect that after the speech by the member for Scarborough—Rouge River he would be getting a mirror out and looking under his car before he starts it up because of his comments about one of the industries out there. But it is time that this was tackled. If you had asked the successive OPP commissioners, for instance—they have been urging governments to tackle the whole area of towing and what is happening out there. There are some good companies doing a good job out there, working hard and trying to serve people appropriately. There are others in the business who would not fit that particular category.

I appreciated the comments that came from the opposition and from the government related to this particular piece of legislation. We are looking forward to the evolution of it, as we debate it in the House—each of the

opposition parties and more government speakers. As always, going to committee is very valuable, hearing from those who will be impacted by it, and ultimately coming forward with a piece of legislation that all of us in this House believe would meet many of the challenges we face now in the auto insurance industry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member and I'd like to thank all those participating in the debate this morning.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** It is now time for us to recess. The House will recess until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I would like to introduce Robert Davidson, president and founder of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation. He is joined by his colleagues Barbara Barr, Michael Jarvis, Henri Lowi and Jacqui Bowick. It's also my pleasure to sponsor their reception this afternoon in the legislative dining room from 5:30 to 7:30 and to invite all members to attend.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. I changed your portfolio for you.

The member from Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery a group of teachers, here for the second annual Teacher's Forum. With them is a great teacher from Oxford county, Timothy Davis, and I'd like to welcome him to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** On behalf of the member from Algoma-Manitowlin and on behalf of page Faith Emiry, I'd like to bring notice to the House that Faith's cousin, former page Owen Ricker, from last year's fall session of 2013—he served in the second group—is in the public gallery this morning. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm delighted to introduce two friends in the Legislature: Sharleen Stewart, the president of SEIU, and Manny Carvalho, the secretary-treasurer of SEIU. Welcome.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to welcome the pharmacists from Pharmasave who are here today and having a reception tonight. In particular, I'd like to especially welcome a classmate of mine, Chris Davies, from Meaford, who is here visiting. Welcome, Chris.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming several esteemed guests from Portugal to Queen's Park today: Mr. Nelson Brito, mayor of the municipality of Aljustrel; Councillor Conceição Parreira; and the senior choir from the University of Aljustrel.

With them is Antonio Rocha from Casa do Alentejo, a dedicated community group from my riding of Davenport who are celebrating their 31st cultural week and anniversary.

Thank you all for being here today.

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** Although they have already been introduced, I would also like to welcome Mr. Robert Davidson and Mr. Michael Jarvis, with the idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis foundation, to Queen's Park today.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Certainly, another representative is here for the Teacher's Forum, a fine high school teacher from Marathon High School in the fine riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North, Mr. Cameron Craig. Welcome, Cameron.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Northumberland-Quinte West?

**Interjection:** No, it's Beaches-East York.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Beaches-East York.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure also to introduce two exceptional teachers from Neil McNeil. I have with us today Chrissy Orr and Marco Tantardini, who are both constituents from a high school in my riding. Thank you. Welcome.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I want to recognize, from Widdifield high school in the city of North Bay, Mr. Mark Hopper, who teaches through the social studies program and who is also one heck of a volleyball coach.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Although my honourable colleague Mr. Yurek introduced Chris Davies, he did not mention that he's from the great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. So I too would like to welcome Chris Davies, a great community member, to the Legislature.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I'd like to recognize the mother of the page who's here from my riding. The page's name is Marie-Thérèse Campione. Her mother, Rosa Campione, is here today with us, with their friend Silvana Acardi. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, in keeping with my colleague from Davenport:

*Remarks in Portuguese.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I think we're all dying for the translation.

We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery 21 teachers from across the province participating in the second annual Legislative Assembly of Ontario Teachers' Forum. Please let me ask you to warmly welcome former colleagues of mine: the teachers. Thank you for being here.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask the pages to assemble to be introduced.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Four of them want my job.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Don't give me set-up lines like that.

Members, we have with us for the first session of the 41st Parliament:



Danielle Beaudoin from Timiskaming–Cochrane; Noah Bolton from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex; Katie Brown from Brampton–Springdale; Marie-Thérèse Campione from Vaughan; Faith Ebanks from York West; Faith Emiry from Algoma–Manitoulin; Darren Fernandes from Mississauga East–Cooksville; Renée Grenaway from Davenport; Colston Howell from Beaches–East York; Rachel Huang from Thornhill; Meher Kapoor from Newmarket–Aurora; Jagmeet Mangat from Bramalea–Gore–Malton; Adam McMahon from Parkdale–High Park; Félix Nunes from Essex; Callum Robertson from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry; Raveen Singh from Markham–Unionville; Josée Stephens from Northumberland–Quinte West; Gregory Van Boekel from Oxford; Lily-Anne Villemaire from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell; Ben Wahl from Kitchener–Waterloo; Morgan Walker from Brant; Erik Webb from Ottawa Centre; Jamie White from York–Simcoe; and Alex Wolf from Don Valley West.

Welcome to our pages. Thank you for being here.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, we're once again hearing of a slowdown in Europe and the broader global economy. This global instability threatens the economy of Ontario, making it even more important that we have a fiscal plan. Well, Ontarians heard about the Premier's plan this past weekend in Windsor. There were plans for an Ontario pension plan, for infrastructure, for taxing and for spending. But, Mr. Speaker, do you know what was not in the Premier's plan? A plan for balancing the budget.

So my question is, when will the Premier finally decide to make balancing the budget a priority for this government?

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, the party opposite continues on a path of talking down Ontario, of not believing in Ontario's future, of not understanding that we have to do all of the above.

We have to make the investments that are going to allow our economy to thrive. That means investment in people's talent and skills. It means investments in infrastructure. It means partnering with business and, yes, it means making sure that people have retirement security.

At the same time, we have a plan to balance the books, to make sure that we eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. That's why we have a President of the Treasury Board. That's why we are making sure that we follow our plan, including optimizing our assets. The member opposite should pay close attention to the plan that we took to the people of Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to immediately remind members that when somebody's answering, there is no heckling on this side; I'll shorten the answer. And on this side I'll shorten the question. I'm also going to start immediately talking to individual members. If they decide that they want to jump right in, I will, too.

*Supplementary?*

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** Whatever investments are being made, they are clearly not producing results. This government continues to set targets which are never being met. Look at the facts. With a debt of nearly \$300 billion—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Economic Development, come to order.

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** —the deficit approaching \$12.5 billion, and a budget that actually increases spending—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** —it's hard to understand how this government intends to balance the budget by 2017-18. With the federal government about to balance their budget, Ontario's deficit accounts for more than two thirds of all of the deficits of all of the provinces in Canada.

My question is simple: When will the budget deficit finally become a priority for this government?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The elimination of the deficit is absolutely a priority for us, but the member opposite neglects to mention that one of the ways that the federal government is balancing its books is on the backs of the people of Ontario. I don't think that that is a rational or reasonable way to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the facts. Since 2009, Ontario has created over 514,000 new jobs, 24,700 net new jobs in September, and that's an increase of 19,100 full-time jobs.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Glengarry, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Youth employment has increased by 12,600 jobs. Our recovery is on track and we are not going to eliminate the deficit on the backs of another level of government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** No one actually believes that old rhetoric about the federal government. The fact is they're doing quite well and Ontario's lagging behind most of the other provinces in Canada. The truth is this government does not have a realistic plan for balancing the budget.

Let's take a look at what the Conference Board of Canada says: "Even if the government manages to achieve their ambitious spending control plan announced in the budget, the conference board projects that the

province will fall about \$2.4 billion short of reaching its balanced budget goal in 2017-18." The facts are clear.

Mr. Speaker, how can Ontarians give any credibility to this government when it comes to balancing the budget and managing debt?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In some ways it's not surprising that the member opposite would be in favour of what the federal government is doing, including hitting Ontario to the tune of \$641 million this year. When other provinces were confronting the same issues, they didn't make that choice. So that's what the federal government is doing.

The other thing is, Mr. Speaker, when that party was in office, they made it a habit of downloading services, downloading costs, onto the backs of the municipal level of government. We're in the process of uploading those costs.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Are you finished?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The election that we all just went through was actually about whether investing in the economy, investing in the future of the province, was the way we wanted to go in this province, or whether cutting and slashing, which is what they brought to the people of Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, on June 12 the choice was made and we're in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** My second question is also to the Premier. Over the past two years, Premier, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts conducted its investigation into the Ornge air ambulance scandal. Prior to the election, the public accounts committee signed off on a report that summarized the work and findings of the committee over that two-year period. Unfortunately, the Legislature was dissolved before the report could be tabled.

Premier, tomorrow the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet for the first time since the election. Will you direct your members to allow that report to be tabled?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the government House leader will want to speak to the supplementary.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important that the committees get up and running. I think it's very important that the committees be allowed to do their work. The reports that were not able to be released because the opposition decided that it was time for an election—we need to get on with that work, and the committees will do just that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** I failed to hear a clear answer there.

On May 30, Ontarians learned that that Ornge air ambulance service had been charged with 17 offences under the Canada Labour Code. The offences cited in the 17 charges were committed under your Deputy Premier's watch and under the watch of senior executives on the board at Ornge.

Premier, whether your minister accepts responsibility for failing in her oversight is one thing, but completely sidelining a report that could prevent future tragedies and mismanagement is unacceptable. Will you commit today, very clearly, to allow that report to be tabled, or will you keep this information secret from the people of Ontario in order to protect your own political interests?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the member opposite for the question. When it comes to the secrecy of that report, I think a former member of their party unfortunately leaked that report anyway, at some point.

Speaker, as you know, the committees have been formed by this House. The committees are starting this week, are starting to commence their work, elect their Chairs and Vice-Chairs, and it will be up to the members of the committee to determine their work plan and to determine what—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The member from Haldimand-Norfolk will withdraw.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Withdrawn.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Carry on, please.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you, Speaker. As I was saying, it's up to the committee members to determine their work plan and determine the kind of steps they will be taking. If they choose to work on the report that the former Standing Committee on Public Accounts was doing and release that information, I leave it up to the committee members.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important that Ontarians know that they cannot hide behind the structure of these committees, that the members of the committee—the Liberal members of the committee—can be directed to release that report. Clearly, we're hearing that's not going to happen, and it's outrageous. We owe it to the front-line responders here, to the pilots, the paramedics and the dispatchers at Ornge who came forward. Most of all, we owe it to the people of Ontario who depend on our air ambulance service to be there when they need it. We need this report to be tabled and these recommendations to be adopted.

Finally, again, Premier, will you please direct the members of this committee to release this report, which is vital to the safety and the interests of the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** When it comes to taking action on the issues around Ornge, I want to commend the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for her incred-



ible work on that matter in the previous Parliament, when the issues came to light. She was forthright, she was forthcoming, she brought information forward, she took immediate action when it came to changing the governance structure at Ornge, and brought forward, in fact, a piece of legislation that would ensure that those types of issues do not take place.

In addition, Speaker, the government fully co-operated with the former Standing Committee on Public Accounts in making information available so the committee members could do their work. It will be up to the new committee members, as they assemble, to determine what next steps to take, and it will be up to them to determine the time frame around when and how they want to make that report available.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. What private companies have approached the government to buy up our shared public assets like our local hydro utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just say that I am very appreciative, we are very appreciative, of the work that Ed Clark and his council have done. We said in our budget, and then in our platform when we ran in the election, that we were going to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario were working at their full value so we could optimize the benefit to the people of Ontario and reinvest the money that would come from that optimization into the infrastructure and into the assets that we need in 2014 and going forward. So that is the advice that is coming forward from Mr. Clark.

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I think it is only responsible and sensible to review the assets that are owned by the people of the province on a regular basis. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. I think it's actually irresponsible that the leader of the third party would not agree that that was a good thing to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, I'm going to try again. Can the Premier tell Ontarians exactly what Ontario, Canadian and foreign investors have approached her Liberal government about buying our shared public assets, like our hydro utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, since the interim report has not even been completed yet and since we haven't even responded fully to what Mr. Clark and his council are suggesting, no, I cannot do that. We have to make sure that we take responsible and practical steps forward. To pre-empt the process before the report is even finalized would, again, be an irresponsible action that the leader of the third party is proposing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Since we know what Liberals are like, perhaps I should ask how much in profits the Premier is dangling in front of energy speculators like

banks and investment firms when she's trying to entice them to buy our shared public assets, like hydro utilities.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do is we are trying to make sure that we make the investments today that are necessary for economic growth, that will benefit future generations. It seems to me that the leader of the third party ought to be—although she never has been—supportive of investments in transit, in roads and bridges across the province. I would have thought that those kinds of investments were the kinds of things the third party would be interested in. I would have thought that the third party would have understood that, to make sure we have those investments available to us, that we invest in the future of the province is in the best interests of the economy not just of today, not just job creation today, which it absolutely does, but for the future so that Ontario can thrive.

Apparently, that kind of responsible, sensible path is not what the leader of the third party supports.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. Can the Premier tell Ontarians whether she has engaged private legal and investment firms to help her with privatizing and selling off our hydro utilities, and if so, who they may be?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Underpinning the questions that the leader of the third party is asking is an assumption that anyone in government who works with the private sector in any way is somehow tainted—that somehow, government and the private sector should never work together, even though the NDP signed contracts with private companies to generate power in the province, even though her own members are interested in extending those contracts, Mr. Speaker, and I have a quote that I will read shortly.

I don't buy into the notion that, somehow, government cannot work with the private sector; I just don't buy that. I believe that the practical way of governing is to work with all stakeholders to make sure that private, government, labour—we all work together in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, clearly it's the Liberals who are tainted. You only need to look at Ornge and the gas plants scandal. That's the problem the opposition has with the way this government deals with the private sector.

As the Premier knows, Ed Clark is still the CEO of TD Bank. So I want to ask: Will TD Bank be involved in the privatization or the purchase of our public assets, like our hydro utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Speaker, let me just go back again to the point that I was making. Our commitment is to unlock the value of the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. That's what we said we were going to do in our budget, that's what we said we were going to do in our plan and that's what we're doing.

The NDP is basically saying that we should not work in any way with the private sector, and yet when they were in government, they signed nine private power-generating contracts over a five-year span, totalling over 400 megawatts of power. They made that commitment.

Now, even her own MPPs don't agree with her, as I said. The NDP MPP for Timiskaming–Cochrane has written to the Minister of Energy to encourage the OPA to renew the contract for a private power generator in his riding. So there are members in the NDP who are practical, there are members in the NDP who understand that working with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** For months, Speaker, this Premier has been insisting that she isn't privatizing anything. She is insisting that there isn't a sell-off. But last Friday, Ed Clark made it clear that the plan is to privatize and sell off local hydro utilities. Instead of being run for the public good, for those utilities to be run in a way that makes life more affordable for everyday families and helps create jobs, they will instead be run to make maximum profits for speculators.

Why does the Premier think that privatized hydro is good for Ontario families and businesses?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane is sitting right beside the leader of the third party, Mr. Speaker. Maybe she should just turn to her left and ask him why he is encouraging the Minister of Energy to extend the private power contract that is in his riding.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You should turn to your left. You should stop turning right. You sound like the Conservatives.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins–James Bay will come to order. I think you knew that was coming.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It must actually be very hard for the leader of the third party to ask these questions. She knows that we're not selling off the assets. She knows perfectly well that that was one of the parameters as Ed Clark went into this review. She knows that we are keeping these assets in public hands, and yet she continues to ask questions to undermine any relationship that the government might have with the private sector as though somehow that's not a good thing. She knows that her own government, when they were in office, had to take those practical—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

## POWER PLANTS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, last summer, I rose in this House and demanded that the justice committee be allowed to continue its work investigating the serious wrongdoing in your gas plant scandal. Summer has turned to fall and the fact remains

that this scandal is ongoing and requires further investigation.

This is not about documents having been released to the committee. This is not about previous witnesses who have testified. This is about how the committee needs to hear from Laura Miller and Peter Faist, two people who have agreed to testify and are at the very centre of this criminal investigation.

Premier, it's time to stop talking about openness and transparency. It is time to demonstrate it by allowing us to interview and depose Laura Miller and Peter Faist. Will you commit to that to this House today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Again, I thank the member opposite for the question, and I think I'll remind the member opposite that the Premier has been very transparent and accountable when it comes to issues around the work that the justice committee was doing. The Premier, since she became the leader, made sure that hundreds of thousands of documents were provided to the justice committee so the justice committee could do its work.

The justice committee has been meeting for about two and a half years. They have listened to about 90 witnesses. And during the last campaign, the Premier made it very clear that she wants the justice committee to complete its work by engaging in report writing so they can provide recommendations to the government around records management, around siting of large energy infrastructure. We look forward to the justice committee completing its work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Back to the Premier. Premier, I'm disappointed that you would pass that off to the House leader. This is a serious matter. You realize that by refusing to do the right thing, it proves that your statements about transparency and openness are nothing but lip service. This is the same old Liberal Party that it has always been.

We need to ask Laura Miller and Peter Faist some serious questions about a serious criminal matter. What about the deleted emails, the destroyed documents and the unauthorized access to the Premier's office? Premier, the people have the right to see this matter investigated fully. Laura Miller and Peter Faist have said they will testify before the committee. There is only one person standing in the way of the truth in this investigation, and, Premier, that is you.

1100

I'm asking you once again: Live up to your rhetoric—one last chance—and let us finally get the answers about who is responsible for the gas plant scandal.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. I'm going to take a moment to remind members that we address each other either by our riding or title. I'll be strict on that.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, the Premier has been absolutely clear. She wants the justice committee to



complete its work. During the campaign, the Premier frequently restated her position that it is time, after years of questioning, about 90 witnesses and looking at hundreds of thousands of documents, that the justice committee engage in report writing.

The justice committee will be resuming its work so that they can complete their report writing. Even the third party, Speaker, brought a motion in the committee asking that it's time to engage in report writing. We're very much looking forward to their work so the government can have the information in terms of recommendations around the siting of large infrastructure projects and document retention, and we're looking forward to their work.

### PAN AM GAMES

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question today is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

Speaker, there have been so many unanswered questions around the cost of security for these games, and just this morning we've learned about a new RFP process that's raising even more questions. Sponsorships for the games are now being directly tied to the RFP for security. What does a company's sponsorship of the games have to do with them being awarded such significant contracts as providing games security?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. I know that the government House leader would like to answer the second part.

Before I answer the question, I just want to say that Lonely Planet today announced Toronto and Ontario are in the top 10 destinations for 2015 because of the Pan Am Games. I think we should all be proud of that.

Mr. Speaker, we take our security very, very seriously here in the province of Ontario. We need to make sure, as we plan for these games, that our security ensures the security of all Ontarians and all visitors.

There are two different components of the security. There's one held by the ISU, and there's one also being held to support the safety and the protection of property during the games. There has been an RFP process put out by TO2015, and in that process, there are specifics that are being asked around the RFP process. I know the minister responsible for public safety will be able to answer that piece of the question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Speaker, this new revelation actually leaves us very concerned about what the real criteria are for awarding contracts for these games. Security costs keep going up. This is a fact. It's undeniable. Some people may be asking, "What are these sponsorship perks?" The method of sponsorship can be cash, an in-kind contribution or a marketing activation value. So people are asking—and these are good questions—whether a company's sponsorship of the games bumps them up the list of bidders, even though it may have added to the cost in the long run.

Speaker, in the interest of being open and transparent, will the minister just release the full criteria of how these contracts are being awarded?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** In fact, I'll take the question. In the RFP process, as outlined by TO2015 in coordination with the ISU, which is made up of the provincial, federal and municipal partners, sponsorship is one of the criteria within the RFP. But this is quite common in all games—the Vancouver Olympics and the last Pan Am Games. I have to say that sponsorship is so important to these games. In fact, our sponsorships here in Ontario for the Pan Am Games are the largest sponsorships ever in the history of the games. It's five times larger than what happened in Mexico at the last Pan Am Games.

These games are successful. They're on time. We will make sure that people in Ontario are safe during these games.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As a public health nurse during the SARS outbreak in 2003, I know first-hand the importance of proper infection controls. I was the manager responsible for the day-to-day operation of the York region SARS clinic.

The Scarborough Hospital Birchmount campus is located in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. It was the first hospital in Ontario to encounter SARS. This hospital was considered the epicentre for SARS, and during the outbreak, more than 100 staff became ill with SARS. Hence, the residents in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt are particularly interested in knowing our government's plan to ensure the province's readiness in dealing with Ebola.

Ontario needs to take action to ensure the province's readiness to contain and treat any potential case of Ebola in the province. Measures need to be in place to protect the safety of all Ontarians, including the health care workers.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What is the government doing to ensure all Ontarians are protected and our health care system is prepared for Ebola?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you, first of all, from one health care professional to another, for the question.

I want to start, in fact, by giving my sincere thanks to the thousands of front-line health care workers right across this province who not only do fantastic work every day but particularly when it comes to our protection against Ebola and the epidemic that's occurring in another part of the world. I want to thank them for the work they do in making sure that Ontarians are safe and protected.

I'm happy to say as well that as a result of our front-line health care workers, particularly our nurses, coming forward last week, we introduced measures to further strengthen the protections that are in place in this province. I announced that we had designated 10 hospitals, two pediatric and eight for adults, across the province. As

well, as of yesterday, we have the capacity in-province to test for Ebola. We'll be doing that on a case-by-case basis.

We've introduced other measures which will guarantee what is in fact my top priority, and that is the safety and security of Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm very pleased to hear of the necessary actions taken by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know the residents of my riding are assured that our province has a minister who listens and takes timely action for the safety of all Ontarians.

But day to day, we continue to hear of the tragedies in West Africa with the Ebola outbreak. The current Ebola outbreak, which began in West Africa in March 2014, is unprecedented. The World Health Organization declared Ebola a public health emergency of international concern on August 8, 2014.

I know many Ontarians, including those in my riding, are concerned about the rapid spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa. Speaker, through you to the minister: How can Ontario support the emergency response in West Africa?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you again for the question. I want to say, on behalf of all Ontarians, just how grateful we are for the hard work, the dedication and the courage of our relief workers, our health care workers and our aid workers who are working in West Africa to put an end to this epidemic. Many of these health care workers, in fact, are coming from Ontario. The Premier and I had the privilege yesterday to meet, and discuss the epidemic in West Africa, with representatives from Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières as well as the Red Cross here in Canada, who have deployed a significant number of health care specialists to the region.

It's a devastating situation, as we all know, but we were happy, on behalf of Ontarians, to announce yesterday—the Premier announced—a \$3-million contribution from Ontario to not only focus on prevention here in the province and making sure that we're prepared, but to be part of the solution there as well, to end this epidemic and this scourge.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Premier. Will the Premier guarantee that the \$224-million loan her government gave to the MaRS phase 2 office tower will be repaid in full?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We've been very clear: The loan is fully secured on the value of the asset, and the asset is more than the amount we've invested. It's a fairly simple answer.

I think it's important at this time to start talking a little bit about the lack of support that we've seen from the PC Party for the MaRS vision. I think what they've done is

indicated that when MaRS was having challenges, their position was to let that building rot in the ground.

I ask the member, in his supplementary will he commit to supporting the efforts we've made to help support MaRS, to ensure that phase 2 succeeds? Or is his party's position, and was his party's position, to let that project rot in the ground, allow those jobs and all that economic development potential in our bioscience sector to go out the window? Is that the position of your party?

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** It's instructive that the Premier did not guarantee that the MaRS loan would be repaid. The Premier was elected on her promise to govern differently, to turn the page on Liberal scandals, to be open and transparent with this House and with the people of Ontario. However, when it comes to the MaRS money pit, they've been anything but open and transparent.

At the estimates committee last week, the minister responsible for MaRS was evasive and dodgy. He refused to release the business case for the MaRS loan and other relevant information related to the MaRS bailout, even though taxpayers are now paying almost half a million dollars a month—a tab that now stands at \$3.6 million.

When will they keep their promise to be open and transparent and release the agreement with Alexandria Real Estate and the business case for the MaRS bailout?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I don't know how much more clear we can be. We've said it a thousand times. The loan is repayable. It will be repaid. It's fully secured, Mr. Speaker. Taxpayer dollars are well protected in this arrangement.

I think what's causing concern in the bioscience sector is the lack of support of the party opposite, which has taken every opportunity to besmirch the reputation of MaRS, after MaRS has created tens of thousands of jobs in this province and attracted \$3 billion of private sector investment to Ontario. The vision of Ernie Eves and Jim Flaherty has become a very important part of our economy. It's really a shame that the party opposite shows so little respect for that vision.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Premier. On March 27, this Premier indicated to Ontarians that she would “open up the government completely.” Yesterday she repeated this promise saying, “We are committed to being open and transparent.” But the Premier failed to say whether she will allow the gas plant committee to get back to work to hear from additional witnesses before writing a final report.

Today the Premier can keep her promise to be open and transparent, or she can break her promise. Will the Premier do the right thing and allow the gas plant committee to resume its work and call any new witnesses who need to be heard?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.



**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Premier. The Premier cannot be clearer. She has been clear all throughout. She wanted to make sure that the committee had all the information available when she became the leader and the Premier. She provided hundreds of thousands of documents. She appeared before the committee—in fact, twice—to answer any questions that the committee may have had; not to mention that during the campaign, when asked repeatedly, the Premier was very clear that it's time for the committee to write its report. She was actually merely echoing what members of the third party themselves had been asking for. The member for Toronto—Danforth, on December 12, said in the committee, "I believe it's time for us to get down to report writing. We've amassed a large amount of evidence, both oral and in electronic copy."

We agree, Speaker: It is time for the committee to resume its work and write a report and give recommendations to the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Some Liberals, including the member for Trinity—Spadina, think there is a right time and a wrong time for openness and transparency. Clearly the Premier is one of them. But New Democrats disagree. We believe the right time for openness and transparency is all the time, every day, day in, day out, without fail and without excuse.

The government isn't just preventing a committee from completing its work. The Liberals are also sitting on the Ornge report, which is printed and ready to be tabled.

I'm going to give the Premier another chance to keep her promise. Will the Premier commit to tabling the Ornge report, and if not, why not?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I ask the member opposite the following question: Does he stand by his motion of April 29, where he moved that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy begin report writing in open session? Does he stand by their own motion that he put forward in the justice committee?

We have been extremely transparent. We want the committee to resume its work as soon as it can and start the work of report writing, as has been asked for by the third party. It's the same with the Ornge committee report: It's up to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. That's why in July, right after the election, we worked so hard to make sure that we've got committees established: so that as soon as we come back in the fall, as we did starting yesterday, the committees can start their work and do the work of the people.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** As a strong supporter of public libraries, I want to let the members of the House know that this week is Ontario Public Library Week. Ontario's public libraries are among the best in the world, and they are popular hubs for community life. There are more than 1,100 libraries throughout Ontario, and they attract over 72 million people every year. Over five million Ontarians—that's 40% of the population—have a library card.

Libraries open up the world to knowledge. They connect us to the information and resources we need to succeed in life, in school and in our jobs. In many communities, libraries ensure that recent immigrants to Canada are welcomed and have access to information and resources to help them adjust to life in a new country.

Libraries offer newcomer information services, provide free help for people looking for a job, housing, learning English, finding schools, getting a driver's licence and other services—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Sorry. Minister.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to thank the distinguished member from Ajax—Pickering for the question.

Mr. Speaker, libraries hold a very special place in my heart, and I'm very proud to take on libraries as part of my portfolio. We know that libraries help children learn. They provide resources for students, small businesses and entrepreneurs, and they make an important contribution to education, literacy and lifelong learning for all people across this great province. That's why we're so proud as a government to invest \$33 million in 2013-14 into our public and First Nation libraries here in the province of Ontario. In fact, since 2003, this government has invested almost half a billion dollars into our public libraries.

We also know that the Trillium Foundation has invested over half a million dollars into our public libraries this year. We're very proud of the work our libraries do here in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Thank you, Minister, for letting us know about all the government support for libraries here in Ontario.

As we all know, we live in a digital world. Everything is moving online and into digital formats. Our libraries are doing a fantastic job at evolving with technology and bringing that technology to communities, including Ajax and Pickering.

In the 2014 budget, I was happy to hear that your ministry is supporting libraries in these efforts through the Ontario capacity fund to help boost digital services. I'm happy that our government is committed to making services in public libraries across the province even better.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Could the minister please tell the members of this House about the Ontario library fund that he announced yesterday? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You're welcome. Minister.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Yesterday, I was happy to announce the Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund at Parkdale public library. Through this new fund, our government is going to invest an additional \$10 million into our public libraries here in Ontario over the next three years to support the following: improvements in high-speed Internet access throughout Ontario—we're going to increase wireless access. We're going to upgrade hard-

ware and software in our libraries. It will go to staff development and collection development, will enhance integrated library services and also enhance our public library websites in Ontario.

This fund is a three-year fund. In the first year, we'll focus on IT improvements. In the second and third years, libraries will be eligible for research and innovation funding.

Our government believes that access to online services is essential in today's knowledge-based economy. I'm happy that we're supporting these goals through this new fund.

## VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, you ordered budget cuts to victim services across Ontario and by as much as 20% in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. As a result, this regional group of 50 volunteers and only seven staff who cover 11,000 square kilometres day and night and who helped over 2,500 victims of crime last year will be left with a pittance of a budget, a budget so small it falls \$60,000 short of the one they started with 16 years ago in 1998. This is a direct attack on public services.

Minister, will you reconsider your cuts to this critical service?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Thank you for the question. Yes, indeed we are modernizing our victim services program to provide enhanced support to victims of crime. Beginning in April 2015, this program will be delivered under a new program called victim crisis assistance. In addition to existing services, vulnerable victims will receive enhanced support, including comprehensive needs assessment. Service plans tailored to individual victim needs will help them navigate and access short- and longer-term support services. So in order to make the program consistent across the province, comprehensive program standards, accountability measures and standardized training requirements for staff and volunteers will be developed. These changes build on our commitment to providing timely and effective services for victims of crime.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again to the Attorney General: Is "modernizing" a code word for downsizing, Minister? Your government is leaving behind victims of sexual assault and people living in violent conditions. I have serious concerns with the priorities of this minister and this government, and the House should too. You're wasting millions of dollars to bail out empty offices in downtown Toronto known as MaRS while gutting millions in community-based services for victims of crime.

Minister, again, will you make this right and reinstate compensation and services for victims of crime?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** We are not reducing funding to any of these programs. Instead, current funding for the three programs is being redirected to a single program.

Yes, we have review now—we're paying for the service that is being offered for the clients that this organization will serve. So there is a reorganization. There is a repurposing of the dollars, and the dollars are being redirected to a single program, as I said.

At the same time, we are implementing a more equitable and transparent funding model by aligning funding with service demands. That means each agency delivering the program will receive a base funding amount and a variable amount based on the number and type of victims served.

So to answer the member, we are providing more money to the northern communities and to the rural communities, so we are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

## DISTRACTED DRIVING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Earlier this year, Metrolinx proposed a plan to allow eight giant digital LED billboards on Metrolinx property along Highway 401. Last week, the Toronto Paramedic Association warned that this scheme would "place us all at greater risk of death and injury."

Mr. Speaker, when a driver's attention is focused on a billboard, it is not focused on the highway. Metrolinx should be in the business of safe travel, not making money from driver distraction. On a day when the Minister of Transportation is announcing legislation to stop distracted driving, will he listen to the paramedics and instruct Metrolinx to drop this dangerous and distracting billboard scheme?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member for Parkdale-High Park for this particular question. I've had the opportunity to review the letter that she referenced in the question from the Toronto Paramedic Association. Of course, Speaker, I take my responsibility to ensure that Ontario's roads remain amongst the safest in North America—and they have consistently been ranked first or second in terms of road safety over the last 13 years—very, very seriously. It's one of the foundational aspects of the mandate letter that I received from the Premier.

I do look forward to having to say a lot more a little bit later today about making sure that our roads and our highways remain safe. I am listening to all of the interested stakeholders, to the municipality, and of course I'm talking to Metrolinx regularly about this and a variety of issues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Earlier this year, Metrolinx also spent buckets of money on several TV ads for transit projects that won't even be operational for several months or even several years. These ads didn't provide any useful information, and one TV spot for the Union-Pearson Express was so ridiculously self-congratulatory that Metrolinx had to pull it off YouTube out of embarrassment. Who knows how much money was wasted? Mr. Speaker, sometimes I can't tell if Metrolinx is a transit



planner or an advertising agency. If Metrolinx needs money, it doesn't need billboards.

Will the Minister of Transportation tell the Mad Men of Metrolinx to get out of the billboard business and get back to the business of transit?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I appreciate the supplementary question from the member from Parkdale–High Park. I think it's important for me to say as clearly as I possibly can that I have a great deal of faith in the tremendous work that has taken place and will continue to take place at Metrolinx. We have a very ambitious, exciting plan about moving Ontario forward. Of course, members like the member opposite would have heard us speak repeatedly about the importance of our Moving Ontario Forward plan. Over the next 10 years we will be investing up to \$15 billion in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, specifically benefiting residents living in Parkdale–High Park, living in communities like mine in Vaughan, people living right across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Metrolinx is playing a very crucial role with respect to the planning and implementation of that plan.

I look forward, over the coming months, to be here in this place and elsewhere continuing on with the great work that we have at hand. I know that the people of the GTHA and people of all of Ontario expect us to deliver the positive results that they've given us the mandate to deliver.

## POVERTY

**Mr. Han Dong:** My question is to the Deputy Premier and minister responsible for the poverty reduction strategy. As of 2011, there were more than 1.5 million people living in poverty in Ontario. That's not okay in a province as strong as ours. Poverty should be no one's destiny. We must come together as a province to ensure that everyone has the opportunity for a better future. In order for all people in Ontario to reach their full potential, we need to make sure everyone has the supports that they need to succeed.

Last Friday, communities around the world observed the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The occasion gave us a chance to reflect on how far we've come as a province to improve the opportunity for vulnerable citizens.

Minister, what is Ontario doing to fight poverty and better support people who need our help?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Trinity–Spadina for the question and for recognizing International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

Speaker, we've made steady progress since we introduced Ontario's first poverty reduction strategy in 2008. According to the most recent data, 47,000 children and their families have been lifted out of poverty, and we've prevented tens of thousands of others from falling into poverty.

In 2003, a single mom with two kids, working full time at a minimum wage job, had an income of less than \$20,000 a year. Today, as a result of our efforts that mom

has an annual income of almost \$35,000, a huge difference for that family.

But there's more to do and that's why we've introduced our second poverty reduction strategy, *Realizing Our Potential*.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you to the Deputy Premier for that response.

Homelessness is often the most visible face of poverty in our community, particularly in the large cities like Toronto. Our people are our greatest resource as we compete in this increasingly tough global marketplace. That is why investments in housing and the supports that go with them are smart investments.

A Place to Call Home provides a stable foundation that helps people lift themselves out of poverty. When people have a home, they are better able to manage the challenges in their lives and to seek the education and training that they need to move forward for better opportunities and stable and rewarding employment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Deputy Premier: How will the new poverty reduction strategy deal with the challenges of homelessness?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As part of our new strategy we have set a long-term goal to end chronic homelessness in Ontario. Ending homelessness is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do, because we know that investments in housing actually mean savings in our health care system and other parts of our social services because people are healthier and they're more ready for employment and taking part in their community.

Our strategy includes several commitments that will help us work toward that goal. We're increasing the funding of the CHPI program, Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, for a total of nearly \$294 million a year. We're adding an additional 1,000 supportive housing spaces for people with mental health and addiction challenges. We're investing \$50 million in a Local Poverty Reduction Fund to support local solutions to poverty. We've set ambitious goals, but we're on our way to achieving them.

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, a few weeks ago you made a major announcement in my riding concerning the overcrowding at Elgin–Middlesex Detention Centre—overcrowding that this Liberal government has ignored for the past three years that has led to numerous deaths and daily violence at the facility.

**1130**

Minister, your ministry's track record is terrible when it comes to fixing the problems at EMDC. Your ministry closed rural jails which amplified the overcrowding conditions, failed on the implementation of the 12-point plan to fix the jail, and failed in providing correctional officers with the proper equipment to do their jobs. So,

Minister, forgive me if I'm sounding a little skeptical on this announcement, but this is a very short time period for a new build. I am unable to find the numbers in this year's budget for this build.

Minster, would you be able to share the budget for the project, where this money will come from and when the RFP will be released?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member opposite for the question and his work and advocacy on issues around the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. As the member opposite mentioned, I had a great visit on October 8 to EMDC. I was joined by management—the hard-working correctional staff, both correctional officers and managers—along with labour leaders both locally and provincially. I was really struck by the professionalism of our correctional staff, both management and correctional officers, how hard they work and how dedicated they are to the well-being and safety of the community. I spent about three and a half hours touring the facility and talking to many correctional officers and thanking them for the work they do every single day in keeping our community safe.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm sure the minister will answer the question after the supplementary.

Minister, I've drawn attention to these issues at the EMDC in this chamber for three years, yet your government has taken little action to correct these areas of concern. The violence and deaths continue.

Most recently I have written you requesting that the government utilize their assets to find a solution for EMDC. For example, the government could utilize the regional mental health buildings in St. Thomas and create a partnership with the Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care for shared services. Or the government could simply reopen the Bluewater Youth Centre in Goderich that your government recently closed.

Minister, have you completed a cost analysis on a new build compared to using the existing government assets?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I would thank the member for the supplementary. We're very much focused on dealing with issues around overcrowding, and ensuring the health and safety of our correctional staff and the safety of the inmates. That's why I want to give credit to my predecessor, the Attorney General. When she was the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services she put in place a 12-point action plan; 11 out of 12 of those action plan items have been fully implemented, but we're not stopping there. We are taking steps in making sure that we have issued a request for proposal for a regional intermittent centre which will allow for separating the intermittent inmates from those inmates who are spending their sentence in its entirety at the detention centre. It's going to not only resolve the issue around overcapacity but it's also going to help us in dealing with contraband issues.

Further, we are also rolling out the personal protective safety equipment for our correctional officers. Their health and safety is a number one priority for our government and remains paramount.

## PROVINCIAL PARKS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, a few years ago, your government decided to shut down access to a number of provincial parks. As a result, Fushimi Lake Provincial Park, René Brunelle Provincial Park and Ivanhoe were going to be closed to both day and seasonal campers. Northerners decided to come up with their own solution. We put together a solution: Local residents, along with the mayors of the area, myself and Mr. Vanthof and others, put together a proposal that allowed those parks to stay open. The parks for the last two years have made money, the pilot project has been successful, but you have yet to make a decision if you're going to renew that agreement or not.

You know as well as I do, if you don't renew the agreement soon, people are going to move and they're going to go elsewhere, making those parks less profitable. Minister, when can we expect a response from you in regard to the renewal of this agreement?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to take the question, and I can't help but comment, Speaker, on your new look. You're reminding me of the 1970s Oakland Athletics, and Rollie Fingers, the old pitcher with the moustache.

But to the member's question, I want to thank him for this. It is topical and timely. As he's mentioned, in 2012 a decision was made to take 10 that were operating parks—most, if not all of them, save and except for one, that were in northern Ontario—and make them non-operating parks.

Like the member did in his question, I do want to thank the communities of Moonbeam, Hearst, Timmins, the surrounding communities, the municipal councils and the surrounding broader community who did step up to the plate and worked very closely with our government and former ministers in coming forward with a plan. I think it's fair to say that it was through their efforts that the two-year pilot was established.

The information and the data are now coming back to us. We've had an opportunity to review that data, and we will be in a position to make a decision very, very soon. I'll be happy to publicly communicate that position to the member very, very soon. We're close. The data is in; we're reviewing it. We will make a decision and an announcement in the very near future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, what part of success don't you like? The northerners rose to the occasion. They said, "We'll find a solution." We found a solution that allowed the parks to stay open and to create a profit.

The issue here—the Premier's making fun of it, because she doesn't understand northern Ontario, and we know that, but here it is: People who have seasonal campers need to know that they've got a place to go this spring. If you delay the decision as to the reopening of the parks until sometime later in January or February, they will lose their spots, but they're going to be avail-



able in other parks. So we need to have an answer soon, not later.

I'm going to ask the minister again: Will you please stand up for northern Ontario and say, "Yes, we will reopen those parks next spring"?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, most of the question was pretty good, but for the member opposite to say that this Premier does not understand northern Ontario is a pretty remarkable statement. There's no Premier that we've ever had, I don't think, that gets northern Ontario better. So much of the good work that we've been able to do as northern members is due directly to the consideration that she gives to northern members.

As I said, there are processes under way now. I don't want to presuppose the results of that work that is ongoing. We will be in a position very, very soon to make an announcement. It's my hope that the announcement will be something that's acceptable to the communities.

I'll close by again thanking the members for the work: the communities, the mayors and the surrounding areas. We'll be announcing something very, very soon.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, this question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister, what pollution was in the 1960s and 1970s, and what civil and women's rights were in the 1970s and 1980s, climate change is today. It is the defining issue of our time. It's the 21st century's challenge to governments, industry, communities and individuals.

In its fifth assessment report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded there is an overwhelming scientific consensus that earth's climate system is warming and that human activities are mainly responsible for this change.

Ontario has delivered cleaner air and significantly lowered carbon dioxide emissions through no longer burning coal to generate electricity.

Minister, what else is Ontario doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to fight climate change?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Ontario is one of a handful of jurisdictions in the world that actually has got its greenhouse gas emissions under 1990 levels. As a matter of fact, we joined, in New York, to release our report—we bettered our 6% goal. We will exceed it. We'll be the only jurisdiction that will likely exceed its targets, I think, probably in the world—maybe Germany.

We are heading not for the two-degrees dangerous, but we're now heading for four-degrees dangerous. Four degrees would mean that my four-year-old grandson probably will grow up in a world where life will be difficult and food will be hard to get. That's not a legacy I am prepared to leave him, Mr. Speaker.

Climate change is the single biggest threat to humanity. Our failure to achieve a successful global action plan in the next year will leave our children an unthinkable legacy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Minister, failing to act on climate change will bring harm, in the form of preventable extreme weather, to our communities and to our economy. And there's the challenge: Climate change doesn't recognize borders or jurisdictions, nor can it be overcome by a single ministry or a single government.

From saving species like Canada's polar bears from extinction to saving coastal populated areas by preventing coastal flooding, how is Ontario continuing to lead and to be successful in the world's continuing fight against climate change?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Just before I get into the details of that, I want to make it very clear: Climate change is not something that is going to come tomorrow or the next day. We are now experiencing the impacts of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from when I was in high school in the 1970s, and we are now locked into 100 years of change.

You are going to start seeing the impacts of climate change in the next winter. California is in the most severe drought situation it has ever been in. That's about one third of North America's food supply. They are now draining aquifers, which is non-renewable water; when I met with Governor Brown in New York, they were very, very concerned.

We saw it here in Ontario, in Lake Erie, when Toledo—400,000 people—couldn't use their water because a warming lake and new patterns of rain pushed more nutrients into that lake, and 400,000 people could not drink water because of the toxins. You could not boil it.

I was going to suggest that if that happened in Fort Erie, this would be a front-page news story. This is the sleeping issue of our time. There is no more important issue. As Secretary Kerry said in New York—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, we can't.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on a point of order.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to correct my record from yesterday. Hansard said that the GDP contribution for the agri-food sector in Ontario was reported as \$30 billion. It's actually \$34 billion in GDP. Hansard said that the number of people employed in the agri-food sector is 74,000; the actual number is 760,000 Ontarians in that sector.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All members have the right to correct their record, as long as they're not changing what was said.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Not at all.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm just pointing that out. Just relax.

## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to welcome one of my constituents, who's here for IPF awareness. Jacqui Bowick-Sandor is here in the gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce a guest, a friend of mine, former senator Len Harris from Queensland, Australia, who has joined us here in Ontario to talk about property rights.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## FAMILY DOCTORS

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Perth–Wellington needs more family doctors. The government should know that by now. For the last three years, my constituents and I have told them so. We're seeing physicians retire, end their practice and move away, with not enough new ones to take their place.

In the last two weeks alone, five people have contacted me to say they need a doctor. That is five people and five families too many. There are no walk-in clinics in Perth–Wellington for people not already registered with a doctor. People are waiting for hours in our emergency rooms to be seen by a physician for routine issues.

Our communities are facing many additional repercussions. Recently, a health care professional emailed me. She was concerned that those without a doctor do not have easy access to the flu shot because it is not yet available in pharmacies.

I also receive many calls from people who are forced to pay hundreds of dollars to access their medical records after they lose their doctor. Repeatedly I've brought their concerns to the attention of the Minister of Health. I have relentlessly spoken up for them.

I hope the new minister will listen. I hope he will ensure that we in Perth–Wellington and all of rural and small-town Ontario will have access to timely medical care.

## MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those who have put their names forward in the upcoming municipal election, which is coming up very quickly, next week. There are, amaz-

ingly, 10 people running for the position of mayor in Greater Sudbury and 60 who are seeking one of the 12 council seats that make up Greater Sudbury.

The new council will face the daunting task, as past leaders in Greater Sudbury have, of trying to take tangible bites out of the approximately \$700-million capital deficit.

I remind the MPPs in the House that Greater Sudbury faces many infrastructure demands, as other municipalities do, yet there is one large difference: The city of Greater Sudbury is about 3,200 square kilometres. We are responsible for 3,600 lane kilometres of roads, 500 kilometres of sidewalks, 873 kilometres of water mains, 793 kilometres of sanitary sewer, two water treatment plants, 10 wastewater plants, 21 deep wells, 69 lift stations etc.

This is coupled with the projected reduction in the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund to Greater Sudbury of \$3.1 million in 2015, \$2.8 million in 2016 and \$2.5 million in 2017. Adding to this dilemma is that the projected tax base growth is pegged at only 0.6% in each of the upcoming three years.

I look forward to working with the new mayor and council of Greater Sudbury to have upper levels of government understand that the approximately 60,000 property taxpayers and 40,000 water/wastewater ratepayers can no longer be hit with high rate increases each year. It is unsustainable.

I urge everyone to go out and vote on Monday.

## MIRACLE LEAGUE OF OTTAWA

## LIGUE MIRACLE D'OTTAWA

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I rise today to thank my colleagues on all sides of this House for their support of the Miracle League of Ottawa, the only Ontario finalist in a national community development competition held this past summer.

Bryce Desrochers, an 11-year-old boy with cerebral palsy who loves baseball, is the inspiration behind a campaign to build the accessible baseball diamond. While the Miracle League of Ottawa did not win the grand prize, it did win one of the secondary prizes of \$25,000. This brought them one step closer to the \$1 million needed to make the project a reality. This was still a great success.

I would like, however, to take the opportunity to warmly thank the Toronto Blue Jays for what they did shortly afterwards. They contacted the Miracle League and the Desrochers family and generously donated \$210,000 to the baseball diamond project.

Grâce à leur générosité, la Ligue Miracle d'Ottawa est maintenant plus proche que jamais de faire en sorte que ce projet devienne une réalité.

This is one of those moments where we can all be proud of what a community and those who rally behind it can achieve for the good of our families and all our children.



## TROY ADAMS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** It's an honour to rise and congratulate a constituent from my riding who is doing great work and having a positive impact across Ontario. Troy Adams of Watford was recently recognized by the Brain Injury Association of Canada, which presented him with the prestigious Prevention and Awareness Award.

Troy suffered a serious brain injury in a car accident 11 years ago, but he met this challenge with passion and purpose. He created the Troy's Run Foundation, which tackles acquired brain injuries by focusing on hope, prevention and education.

I had the opportunity to meet with Troy here at Queen's Park in 2012 as he ran across Canada to support his foundation. Since then, he has been busy hosting community events, fundraising and training for more long-distance runs, including one he plans to make across the Canadian Arctic next year. Along the way, he has been an exceptional role model and a force for good in his community.

Thank you, Troy, for working so hard to create positive change, and congratulations on this well-deserved recognition from the Brain Injury Association of Canada.

## NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Since the election this past June, I've spent my time travelling around the vast and beautiful riding of Kenora-Rainy River, listening to many of my constituents regarding their needs and their highest priorities.

I have heard from people about their concerns about the unaffordability of everyday life, whether it is the high cost of groceries and gasoline, their property tax bills, or home heating such as hydro or oil. When I was face to face with these hard-working people and hearing their stories, their struggles were palpable.

I heard more concerns about not being able to access health care close to home. Instead of having access to medical services in Winnipeg, about 200 kilometres away, an increasing number of people are being told that they must travel 2,000 kilometres away to the nearest specialty clinic in Ontario.

Northerners continue to strive for fairness when it comes to our economy and things like ensuring the continued operation of the Emo Agricultural Research Station, forestry licences being assigned to and benefiting local communities, resource revenue-sharing with First Nations, provincial consistency and appropriateness of trucking regulations, and more.

As well, we're faced with some challenges accessing justice: the absence of a resident judge in Rainy River, First Nation jury representation issues, as well as the increasingly pressurized issue around missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Finally, no matter which area of my riding you're in or the time of year, there are always concerns about transportation safety, like winter highway maintenance and the twinning of Highway 17.

These are some of the issues important to the north-west, and I will continue to raise them in the upcoming months.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Engaging parents in the education of their children is a critical part of student success. Since 2006, our government has invested \$24 million into Parents Reaching Out grants across Ontario.

Building on this model, the Toronto Catholic District School Board and Catholic schools in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt have created a PRO Partnership to pool their grant funds and make programs accessible to students and families from both large and small schools.

Last year, the PRO Partnership had seven member schools. This year, the partnership made history by more than doubling its size to 15 member schools, representing 5,175 families from North York and Scarborough.

On October 4, the PRO Partnership held a community fair at St. Sylvester Catholic School in my riding. The proceeds from the fair will support new programs like the interactive family math and literacy workshops that engage parents in their children's studies.

I want to thank parent organizers Sarah Deir, Liz Garcia, Jackie Sajanlal and Evette Harding, and principals Roy Fernandes and John Masciarelli for all their hard work.

I also want to pay tribute to and thank Theresa Pastore for her work in bringing the teachers, principals, students and families together for this annual community event, and I look forward to attending the 2015 PRO Partnership community fair.

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## IMPACT CENTRE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Last week, I had the pleasure of visiting the Impact Centre at the University of Toronto, where I met with Director Cynthia Goh, Technology Director Rich McAloney and Assistant Vice-President of Government Relations Marny Scully.

The Impact Centre focuses on cross-disciplinary research and development dedicated to creating value to society. The centre links chemistry, physics, materials science, biology, nanotechnology, photonics and engineering, all for the betterment of the world.

I had the opportunity to visit the labs the students work in and where they build amazing prototypes like the new plug-free electric hybrid prototype, which was featured in the Toronto Star on October 14. You charge the vehicle's battery by pedalling. The intensity of pedalling controls its 500-watt engine's throttle. The engine itself is fully programmable, which means that you could easily adjust the pedal-to-engine power ratio. You can let the engine do most of the work, so you don't show up to work sweaty, and if you are in need of a little exercise, you can pedal the roughly 45-kilogram vehicle. The three-wheeled vehicle is tall enough to be seen by

other traffic yet narrow enough to manoeuvre through congested streets. It even has a windshield to protect you from the elements, and a small trunk.

On November 5, the Impact Centre will be showcasing their latest achievements in a “techno showcase” at the MaRS building. I encourage everyone to attend the event and witness the future of technology here in Ontario, and I thank the organizers for allowing me to visit the Impact Centre.

## EVENTS IN KITCHENER CENTRE

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm very delighted to rise in the House today to share with you and my honourable colleagues some news of exciting events that have been occurring in the community of Kitchener Centre.

On October 10, I was delighted to welcome Premier Kathleen Wynne to Kitchener to join us for the official opening of the 46th annual Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, complete with keg-tapping ceremonies. This event marked the official kickoff of the nine-day German festival, which has long been celebrated in my community.

Over the course of 46 years, Oktoberfest has had an estimated \$1-billion impact—yes, I said \$1 billion—on the Kitchener-Waterloo economy. This year, \$22 million was filtered through our community as a result of the festival. Kitchener can also be proud of the estimated \$1.5 million in donations for local charities as well as the 11,000 pounds of food that was collected for the Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

Every year, we also celebrate German Pioneers Day. This year, the Swiss Mennonite family of Peter and Anna Martin was recognized for its contributions to the community through business, the arts and education.

We also celebrated the Concordia Club. Founded in 1873, it has been a strong influence on culture in our community.

I welcome all of you to visit Kitchener-Waterloo in the future to celebrate Oktoberfest—even you, Mr. Speaker. I know you like to do a little dance. We can do some chicken dancing, perhaps.

*Remarks in German.*

## STREETSVILLE VILLAGE SQUARE

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This year of 2014 has been a very exciting one for all of us in western Mississauga, particularly our neighbours in the village of Streetsville. After some \$3 million of investment and months of construction work, Streetsville Village Square has been reopened to the public as of the middle of September. It's a new and refreshed square and it features a modern covered stage, a sound system and a brand spanking new state-of-the-art lighting system. The focal point of the new Streetsville square is the fully restored cenotaph, which will ensure that Ontario will continue to honour those who served in uniform for Canada.

Ward 11 councillor George Carlson was the primary driving force behind the project. In fact, my federal

colleague, MP Brad Butt, also helped to secure the funding.

The idea to revamp Streetsville Village Square has been in the making for nearly eight years. It's a new and revamped square that honours tradition while embracing modern urban design.

Streetsville Village Square is an even better destination for residents of western Mississauga, a wonderful welcome to our visitors and a great boon for local businesses.

The official opening of Streetsville Village Square is slated for next spring.

I want to congratulate the Streetsville BIA and everyone involved in making the project happen, and I hope to welcome many visitors to historic Streetsville.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### HIGHWAY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA GESTION DES INCIDENTS DE LA ROUTE

Mrs. Martow moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to require the establishment of an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for the improvement of highway incident management / *Projet de loi 30, Loi exigeant la constitution d'un comité consultatif pour formuler des recommandations au ministre des Transports et au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels en ce qui concerne l'amélioration de la gestion des incidents de la route.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** The bill requires the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police to establish an advisory committee to analyze highway incident management and to develop a comprehensive program to improve it. The committee is to be established within 60 days after the bill receives royal assent and must report to the two ministers within eight months after its establishment. The committee's report must make recommendations respecting the following:

(1) providing public education programs to improve driver behaviour in circumstances involving highway incidents;



(2) reducing the time for appropriate authorities to detect and verify highway incidents and to clear highways after the occurrence of highway incidents;

(3) providing timely and accurate information about highway incidents to drivers;

(4) enhancing the safety and security of Ontario's highways.

Within 60 days after receiving the advisory committee's report, each minister must inform the assembly of the recommendations that he or she will implement.

TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW  
AMENDMENT ACT (MAKING  
ONTARIO'S ROADS SAFER, 2014  
LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE TRANSPORT (ACCROÎTRE LA  
SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE EN ONTARIO)

Mr. Del Duca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2012 sur l'autoroute 407 Est et le Code de la route en ce qui concerne diverses questions et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi sur les infractions provinciales.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I'm very, very proud to stand to stand in my place today to introduce this particular bill, my first bill being brought forward to the floor of the Legislature as Ontario's Minister of Transportation.

I want to pay very quick tribute to two of my predecessors, the current Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the current Minister of Energy, for the extraordinary work that they brought to bear when they were both serving as Ministers of Transportation here in Ontario. Their work has helped to largely underpin and be at the very foundation of this legislation that I'm introducing today, and I want to thank them for their work.

Also, I'm very happy to have been joined by a number of my colleagues, including both of my parliamentary assistants, the new member from Burlington and our new member from Trinity-Spadina, earlier today when I spoke to the media about our plan to introduce this new legislation.

Of course, we were joined by a very large number of our road safety partners. In particular, I want to acknowledge Brian Patterson, who is here with us in the gallery today from the Ontario Safety League. Mr. Patterson, along with a number of other road safety partners, was

there. They were very happy to hear about this legislation.

From what I recall during our last session, Speaker, this was legislation that enjoyed broad support in terms of making our roads safer—

**1520**

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I let this go a little bit, but the normal procedure is either a ministerial statement or you read from the explanatory notes of what the bill is. I would remind all members that that's the process that we have and I would appreciate very much that it take place in that manner.

Introduction of bills? The member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

BOB MACKIE ACT, 2014

LOI BOB MACKIE DE 2014

Mr. MacLaren moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to repeal the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act and to make a related amendment to the Ministry of Natural Resources Act / Projet de loi 32, Loi visant à abroger la Loi sur la planification et l'aménagement de l'escarpement du Niagara et à apporter une modification connexe à la Loi sur le ministère des Richesses naturelles.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Mr. Speaker, the bill, the Bob Mackie Act, 2014, repeals the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act and adds a section to the Ministry of Natural Resources Act to permit regulations to be made addressing transitional matters arising from the repeal of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today, at my first opportunity since the Legislature resumed sitting, in celebration of Ontario's agricultural industry and the people whose care and pride make it so great.

Each year, in the days leading up to Thanksgiving, we celebrate Agriculture Week in Ontario. Agriculture Week provides an excellent opportunity to connect rural and urban communities and to help us develop a deeper appreciation for the good things that are grown, harvested and made right here in Ontario. The agri-food industry is

a driving force for Ontario's economy. It contributes \$34 billion in GDP each year and supports over 740,000 jobs.

Our government believes in the incredible value and potential of the agri-food industry. That is why Premier Wynne issued the agri-food growth challenge last year. Her challenge encourages the sector to double its growth rate and create 120,000 new jobs by 2020.

But, Mr. Speaker, agriculture is about much more than just the numbers. This year, to kick off Agriculture Week, I had the opportunity to participate in a Breakfast on the Farm, hosted by Farm and Food Care Ontario, at Wilmot Orchards in beautiful Newcastle, Ontario. Let me tell you, there is no better place to enjoy the most important meal of the day than on the farm.

Along with more than 1,700 other visitors, we feasted on pancakes with blueberries and warm maple syrup, eggs with pork sausages, fresh greenhouse tomatoes, and plenty of crisp, sweet apples. All of it was locally sourced and all of it was free to everyone who wanted to take part.

The dedication of our farmers and food producers was evident at this wonderful event. At 6 a.m., a crew of Ontario egg farmers cracked 3,000 eggs to ensure the breakfast provided was as fresh as possible.

So many Ontarians were there enjoying the day and learning about where their food comes from, the hard work that goes into growing it and the people who care so deeply to provide our province with delicious, healthy food.

This year, to close Agriculture Week, I visited the 146th edition of the Norwood fair in my riding of Peterborough, a great tradition celebrating agriculture and farming in eastern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we're also starting to see farmers and consumers connected through social media. Farmers are sharing information about their harvest using #harvest14, just as they used #plant14 in the spring. These online interactions help more Ontarians learn where their food comes from, and build bonds between rural and urban communities in this great province.

At Wilmot Orchards I had the opportunity to share the good news that our government is investing \$221,500 in Ontario's apple growers to help increase sales and demand for fresh Ontario apples—the best in the world. This funding will support apple sampling programs at grocery stores, an event to celebrate Ontario apples and culinary demonstrations to show consumers new ways of using Ontario apples.

Mr. Speaker, from field to fork, we are seeing farmers and producers embracing the spirit of the Premier's Agri-Food Challenge. This investment is one way in which we are supporting their efforts.

Just before Agriculture Week, I had the privilege of announcing our Food Donation Tax Credit for Farmers at Hamilton Food Share.

I also want to recognize the great work that's done by the member from Simia-Lambton.

This initiative, brought about through the hard work of all parties in this Legislature, rewards farmers for their

generosity by giving them a 25% tax credit for the agricultural products that they donate to community food banks. This is the only credit of its kind in Canada and is already helping to increase the amount of healthy, local food available at food banks and student nutrition programs right across this great province.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's agricultural sector helps us build economically stable, environmentally safe and socially thriving communities. It is an important link to our past, an essential part of the fabric of rural communities today, and is vital—vital—to our economic future.

Fall is a perfect time to connect with our agricultural roots and choose to make locally sourced Ontario food a regular feature of our meals each and every day.

I want to thank all who made Agriculture Week 2014 a success, and I encourage all Ontarians to get out and visit a farm or a farmers' market this week.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY WEEK

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** This week is Ontario Public Library Week. Held every fall since 1985, Ontario Public Library Week raises awareness of just how central libraries are to our communities, our families and our businesses. It reminds us of the important role libraries play in building strong and vibrant communities across this great province.

Nearly five million Ontarians—that's 40%—have library cards. In addition to that, there are over 72 million in-person visits to our libraries every year. Mr. Speaker, there is a reason for that. Our public libraries are among the best in the world and offer people a place where they can learn about anything and everything.

The world has gone through a significant change in the way we share information, and Ontario libraries have evolved with it: from manual card catalogues to high-speed Internet access; from hard-copy books to e-books; from photocopiers to 3-D printers. In fact, I was at the Toronto Reference Library a couple of weeks ago and I saw one of the 3-D printers in action. It was just really incredible.

Our libraries continue to innovate in order to better serve and reach a broader audience and improve their user experience. That's why our government is pleased to invest in public libraries through the new Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund. Announced in the 2014 budget, this \$10-million investment will build on the great work being done by our public libraries by improving and expanding IT and digital services, including the Internet and wireless access; developing user-friendly websites; enhancing collection development, such as e-books; supporting staff development; and encouraging innovation and research.

The Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund is a three-year program.

I'd like to take a moment just to thank the former minister of this file, Minister Chan, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, for his work over the last few years advocating for this type of fund.



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The first year will focus on IT improvements and service delivery in our libraries. In years two and three, projects that support research and innovation will also be eligible for funding.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes in access to digital resources and services, and we believe they're essential in today's knowledge-based economy. As community hubs, public libraries play an important role in bringing that technology into their communities. Libraries open up a world of knowledge. They connect us to the information and resources we need to succeed in life, at school, and within our jobs. Libraries give us access to great literature, to music, and to film; resources that help people develop all aspects of their lives and innovative new technologies that provide creative opportunities.

Through strategic investments like the Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund, we're ensuring that Ontarians have access to high-quality services and information, and we are committed to making services in public libraries and across the province even better.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the great work that the staff do in all of our Ontario public libraries across this province to promote education and literacy, and contribute to the health and well-being of our communities.

I encourage all Ontarians to visit your local library this week and get involved in the exciting lineup of events planned in communities across the province that celebrate and honour our public libraries.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I am pleased to rise today to talk about climate change, the defining issue of our time. I would also like to thank my friend the Honourable Jim Bradley, my predecessor, for his work on this very important issue.

Our government sees climate change as an existential threat, which is why I joined nearly 400,000 other people marching through the streets of New York City to call for action during Climate Week last month.

If the nations of our planet cannot achieve a peak in emissions within the next few years on the path to net zero greenhouse gas emissions, by mid-century, then we are inviting the unthinkable. Business as usual on a global scale means we will see a mean temperature rise of between three and five degrees Celsius in the second half of this century. That would itself cause global catastrophe and massive loss of life, as well as the extinction of most of the species on this planet.

US Secretary of State John Kerry put it succinctly, when speaking to the UN Climate Summit last month, when he said, "The science is unequivocal, and those who refuse to believe it are simply burying their heads in the sand. We don't have time for a meeting anywhere of the Flat Earth Society. And in a sense, climate change can now be considered another weapon of mass destruc-

tion, perhaps the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction."

In the words of former US Treasury Secretary and Republican Henry Paulson, "Viewing climate change in terms of risk assessment and risk management makes clear to me that taking a cautiously conservative stance—that is, waiting for more information before acting—is actually taking a very radical risk. We'll never know enough to resolve all of the uncertainties. But we know enough to recognize that we must act now."

Fighting climate change has the potential to create unprecedented economic growth around the world, but especially here in Ontario.

During Climate Week, Secretary Kerry also showed us that we are standing on the verge of a massive opportunity. Moving to a low-carbon economy will unleash a new era of prosperity in the western world six times greater than the \$1-trillion tech boom of the 1990s. That's a \$6-trillion opportunity in non-greenhouse gas-emitting vehicles, renewable energy, and durable rather than disposable products. But governments have to be prepared to take action and seize this opportunity.

One of the major reasons I joined this government in 2010 was because of Ontario's leadership on climate change. Mr. Speaker, Ontario has bettered its 2014 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 6% below 1990 levels, making it one of the only jurisdictions in the world to be below 1990 levels. Along with Quebec, we are two of a handful of jurisdictions that have achieved this.

We have to see enough other jurisdictions achieve reductions below 1990 levels to avoid this impending catastrophe. This is why Ontario is working with Quebec and California to build momentum for deep greenhouse gas emission reductions across North America, on the path to the 2015 UN climate conference in Paris.

Eliminating coal-fired generation in Ontario was critical to our fight against climate change and is the single largest greenhouse gas emission reduction initiative in North America. In 2015, we will introduce a climate change strategy to achieve essential greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 and for all the years up to 2050.

We are not just fighting climate change. Through our government's investment in people, building modern infrastructure, and a dynamic and innovative business climate, we are actually delivering a low-carbon economy. Ontario can be a major part of the solution to this global challenge and a leader in this new economy.

We have a lot of work to do, but we don't do it alone. In August, our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, and Premier Couillard of Quebec agreed to renew their strong partnership and focus on these key initiatives. Deputy ministers from both provinces will be meeting regularly to update and strengthen bilateral collaborative agreements, with a priority on climate change issues. We hope to build on this strong relationship and tackle our climate change goals together.

This government will continue to take strong action on the defining issue of our generation. Between our

ongoing investments in technology, our commitment to clean energy and our continued partnerships with our allies, Ontario will be a leader in the fight against climate change. In the coming months, we will unveil our climate change strategy to avoid the unthinkable, while seizing hope and the opportunity that only transformative leadership can deliver.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Responses?

### ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, of course we're all very pleased to recognize Ontario Agriculture Week, which ran October 6 to 12, leading up to Thanksgiving. I know that locally it coincided with our Norfolk County Fair and Horse Show—we get well over 100,000 people who come out to that—and it coincides with so many other fairs, weekend festivals and celebrations across the province.

Depending on the weather, so many farmers spend Ontario ag week trying to get their soybeans off and trying to get some winter wheat in, and dealing with mud, frost and breakdowns—broken hydraulic fluid lines, running out of diesel: all the things that I used to get involved in at this time of year. The diversity of crops, whether it be squash, pumpkins, apples—we're blessed with so many different commodities in the province of Ontario.

I've got to point out that Ontario ag week was a private member's bill introduced way back when by MPP Bert Johnson, a former member for Perth. It's a very important way to celebrate the contributions of our farmers, whether they be large or small, and whether they produce food, fibre, pharmaceuticals, international exports or local food. It's a great idea and it's something we will continue to celebrate for many years on into the future.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you, Minister, for your statement. While I genuinely appreciate your commitment and passion for taking action when it comes to climate change, I'm still left concerned about your government's ability to produce results on this matter.

Minister, you noted the urgency when it comes to climate change. However, your government has had over a decade to do something, and, other than the elimination of coal-fired power generation, your government has virtually done nothing with respect to climate change.

I would be remiss if I didn't officially recognize Huron county's own Elizabeth Witmer for her efforts on behalf of the PC Party of Ontario with regard to starting the reduction of coal use in Ontario.

Minister, if you're serious about protecting the environment, why did the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario warn that the Liberal government is dismantling environmental protections, which could have disastrous results?

More recently, in the Environmental Commissioner's annual report, he described Ontario's current pollution-fighting efforts as an embarrassment, elaborating that it

was only a mere two decades ago that our province had a world-class pollution control system.

1540

We're already hearing about serious lapses in competency within your ministry in terms of your pollution-fighting efforts, and then when you couple this with recent public accounts showing a further reduction of \$91 million in your ministry's budget, it concerns me where and how these cuts will affect Ontarians.

Minister, while I know you mean well, I hope this is not rhetoric and that your government actually supports you and ultimately delivers solutions that help our environment while being cautious of maintaining a healthy economy, meaning jobs throughout Ontario.

### ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY WEEK

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It brings me great pleasure to rise in the House today, on behalf of the PC caucus, in response to the government's announcement of the \$10-million library capacity fund and also in recognition of Public Library Week in Ontario.

This is a time when we give our thanks and congratulations to the librarians, staff and volunteers who have inspired and assisted people to make a positive difference to their lives.

Whenever I visit a library in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I'm reminded of how our libraries continue to be at the heart of communities, even as they're becoming about so much more than books. The quickly evolving technologies are transforming the way people access information and communicate with each other.

I want to again recognize the great work done by our librarians, staff and volunteers, who are challenged every day to maintain traditional services and embrace new services and technologies with existing money. They've risen to this challenge well, despite funding gaps, as highlighted in the most recent report issued by People for Education, which found that teacher-librarians in Ontario schools continue to decline dramatically, especially in rural and northern Ontario, where students are least likely to have a teacher-librarian or library technician.

I wonder how the minister would explain his love of literacy, lifelong learning and cultural development across the province and building of strong, vibrant communities when his government continues to leave behind rural and northern Ontario libraries.

Unless the minister agrees to fix the disparity in the way our libraries are funded—which can range from 49 cents per resident to \$26 per resident, depending on where you live in Ontario—his love of literacy, lifelong learning and cultural development and building of strong, vibrant communities are just empty words.

### ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's an honour to be able to speak on behalf of my NDP colleagues regarding the celebration of Agriculture Week.



We've heard that agriculture creates 740,000 jobs and adds \$34 billion to the Ontario economy. That's incredibly important. But to us, Agriculture Week is about the families who grow our food. It's about the families who know the joy of getting a heifer calf from your best cow. It's about the families who know the joy of pulling into a field and doing the first round and knowing it's going to be a bumper crop. It's about the families who know the heartbreak, like my friends in Timiskaming-Cochrane, of having a month of rain and watching some of their crops rot in the field. That's what Agriculture Week is about.

Those families not only need strong risk management programs, but they are families: They need rural schools, they need rural hospitals, they need rural home care. Our party understands that, and we will continue to advocate for that.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It's my pleasure to rise to comment on the minister's statement on a new climate change strategy. I guess I shouldn't be surprised, because back on July 9, Gord Miller, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, predicted that the province would likely meet its 2014 greenhouse target because all the coal plants were shut down. But at the same time, he predicted—in fact, he warned—that the province will not be able to meet the 2020 target because the province “has taken very little additional action to implement the climate change action plan it released seven years ago.”

Mr. Miller went on to say, “Ontario appears to have lost the ambition it once had and won't even look at directives to ensure more compact urban development or a serious commitment to using electricity for transportation.”

Today we're being asked to hold our breath and to bury our head in the sand until next year sometime, when a new strategy will be introduced. I'm looking forward to it, Speaker, very much so.

I'd just remind the minister, if he's not doing anything Thursday night at 8:30, that on the federal NDP Facebook page, the NDP environmental critic, Megan Leslie, is hosting a Q&A on climate change. You might find it interesting, sir.

### ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY WEEK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my honour to respond to the minister about this gift to libraries. It's a gift; I'll give him that. It's not a great gift. It's \$10 million over three years to hundreds of libraries. One hopes that the gift is given equally so that First Nations libraries and libraries in the north and libraries that we were speaking about earlier also get their fair share. We're hopeful about that.

I also want to thank the minister for visiting my riding. He came to the Parkdale library to make the announcement. Had he let me know—I live a few doors from that library—I would have invited him in for tea, and I would have told him a few things. I would have told him about

the community which he visited, a community that has high rates of poverty, a community that has high rates of homelessness, a community that has incredible need for that library, not just for the books but for a space for children to do their homework, to use a desktop computer, which many do not have at home—from the high school around the corner from that library that had, at one point, 64 mother tongues spoken.

Those children, newcomers, many of them refugees and immigrants who want for the very basic necessities, including OHIP, most of them, for the first three months—when we talk about risk management, we should talk about that, because that's a serious risk for everyone in Ontario. But for those children, that library is a haven. That library is also the host to many community activities. Our local city councillor uses that library for their office hours. All of this would have been his, had he only let me know that he was coming to Parkdale.

But suffice as it is, \$10 million is better than a slap in the head. We're glad about it. Three years—that's a long time. And hundreds of libraries—that's a lot of libraries. We're going to be tracing that, Mr. Minister. We're going to be making sure that First Nations and the people in Timiskaming-Cochrane and the people all over Ontario get their fair share, because they deserve it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would thank all those who responded to the ministers. Since the time for responses has expired, we'll now move into petitions.

### PETITIONS

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I support this petition and will affix my signature and send it with page Darren.

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I have a petition signed by people right across this great province.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired; and

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my name to it and give it to Josée to bring up to the desk.

1550

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas the patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition. I will give my petition to page Adam.

### LYME DISEASE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** "Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available" to all patients and physicians.

I affix my signature to the rest of these names.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition from across Ontario in support of youth correctional workers in the province. It says,

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

"Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and



"Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage...; and

"Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding."

I couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to page Rachel to bring to the Clerks' table.

#### CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition for you, a petition to designate May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas childhood apraxia of speech is a rare neurological speech disorder that affects oral motor planning;

"Whereas an estimated 3% to 5% of the world's childhood population are diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas Ontario has excellent speech-language centres and programs that currently provide treatment for childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas children diagnosed in Canada with childhood apraxia of speech are eligible to receive the children's disability tax credit to assist with therapy costs;

"Whereas greater public awareness of speech disorders and the benefits of early intervention speech-language therapy are needed in the province of Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to join the United States of America in declaring May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day."

I support this petition, I sign it and I give it to new page Morgan. Welcome, Morgan, to Queen's Park.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize the member from Perth-Wellington.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the final report of the select committee, entitled Inclusion and Opportunity: A New Path for Developmental Services in Ontario, was tabled in the Legislature on July 22, 2014;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That" the "government of Ontario immediately review the final report and commence the implementation of the recommendations of the select committee, as contained in the final report."

I agree with this petition and I will give it to page Colston.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 2013, 16 construction workers in Ontario were killed in tragic falls, almost 3,400 WSIB fall claims were accepted, and many other falls were never reported;

"Whereas in addition to the human tragedy of workplace falls, the financial cost of each year's WSIB fall claims is about \$100 million;

"Whereas the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador implemented new fall protection training regulations on January 1, 2012, after which fall claims declined by 25%;

"Whereas a similar training requirement and result in Ontario could prevent over 800 fall tragedies each year and avoid \$25 million in costs with the WSIB; and

"Whereas in 2010, the Ontario government promised to implement a similar training requirement by December 2011, but still has not done so; and has thereby left workers at risk;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Labour to make saving workers' lives a priority and stop delaying fall protection training regulations."

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Jamie to deliver to the table.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I've signed the petition and I'm going to pass it on to Josée from the riding of Northumberland-Quinte West.

## HOSPICE FUNDING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize the interim leader of the official opposition, the member from Simcoe–Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I expire in eight months.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a discrepancy”—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I just caught that, Minister—“between how hospices are funded in Ontario; and

“Whereas Matthews House Hospice is the lowest-funded hospice in the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and among the lowest-funded in the province, even though it serves as many clients or more than other hospices that receive greater provincial support; and

“Whereas Matthews House has been told by the Central LHIN that LHINs do not fund residential hospice operational costs and yet hospices in other LHINs, including Barrie, Huntsville, Richmond Hill, Owen Sound and now Collingwood, all receive operational funding from the province; and

“Whereas in February 2010 Matthews House Hospice was promised a solution to its underfunding by the Central LHIN which has never materialized;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Wynne government immediately develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with hospice funding to ensure that people in south Simcoe and all Ontarians receive equal access to end-of-life care.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the petition, and I have signed it.

1600

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in 2013, 16 construction workers in Ontario were killed in tragic falls, almost 3,400 WSIB fall claims were accepted, and many other falls were never reported;

“Whereas in addition to the human tragedy of workplace falls, the financial cost of each year’s WSIB fall claims is about \$100 million;

“Whereas the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador implemented new fall protection training regulations on January 1, 2012, after which fall claims declined by 25%;

“Whereas a similar training requirement and result in Ontario could prevent over 800 fall tragedies each year and avoid \$25 million in costs with the WSIB; and

“Whereas in 2010, the Ontario government promised to implement a similar training requirement by December 2011, but still has not done so; and has thereby left workers at risk;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Labour to make saving workers’ lives a priority and stop delaying fall protection training regulations.”

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

“Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

“Whereas the patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

“Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario’s health care sector;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman.”

It’s something I agree with wholeheartedly and will sign and leave with Meher.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONGER WORKPLACES  
FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION  
DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE  
D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 20, 2014, on the motion for second reading of Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l’emploi et la main-d’œuvre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** When this item of business was last debated, we completed questions and comments on the speech of Mr. Vanthof from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is great to see you in the chair again, and it’s good to be back.

I’m very pleased today to stand to speak to Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. I would like to congratulate Minister Flynn and Minister Naqvi, who put forward this bill in the last Legislature. We have had some time to debate this bill. I would also like to congratulate Minister Flynn on his work on work-related traumatic stress. I know that continues to be an



important issue to him. I know it's not included in this bill, but I would be remiss if I didn't say that. I didn't get an opportunity to say it yesterday.

Of course, the bill is a combination of two bills in the last session that we had some opportunity to debate. I had the opportunity, as well, to be here yesterday and hear some of the comments in the leadoff debate. I know that the member from Leeds–Grenville raised some concerns that this was an omnibus bill. I don't think that's an accurate representation. It's a combination of one bill that's a bit bigger and one very straightforward bill—the increase in the minimum wage and tying that to CPI.

You know, we're taking action to try and provide a fair and consistent approach to setting Ontario's minimum wage, and in this bill, we propose legislation to index future minimum wage adjustments to Ontario's CPI. This approach has been supported by both employees and employers and is based on the recommendations of the panel.

That Minimum Wage Advisory Panel was established in July 2013 as part of a 2013 budget commitment, and it was composed of employer and labour representatives, community and anti-poverty groups, and a student.

The panel's report was based on extensive research, and I know they did go across the province and queried over 400 Ontarians. It recommended the following:

- that the minimum wage be revised annually and linked to the consumer price index;

- that at least four months' notice be given of that change; and

- that, in five years, a full review be conducted with a panel of stakeholders and an independent chair.

I know that in some of the responses in the leadoff yesterday—there was some concern expressed by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington that this was going to have some impact on our economy, and I was concerned that this would go unchecked. I think it's very clear that—first of all, I don't agree with his assertion that tying this to CPI would affect our economy in a negative way. However, it is provided in this bill that, again, the full five-year review be conducted by a panel of stakeholders and an independent chair to take a look at how it has been working.

When we first came to office in 2003, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight. Since then, the minimum wage has increased from \$6.85 to the \$11 it is today. In the past, you can see that these increases to minimum wage were basically ad hoc and were subject to a political process. We think that, for people earning the lowest incomes in Ontario, simply tying it to the increases in the consumer price index—these are the people who are most affected by those increases—that this is just the right thing to do. That's why we introduced this legislation.

I was also very pleased yesterday to listen to the members on all sides of the Legislature talk about how important it is to protect vulnerable workers. By acting to strengthen workplace protections for the most vulnerable and increasing fairness for employees and businesses, we

build a stronger workplace and we'll build a stronger economy and thus a stronger Ontario.

We all recognize here that the nature of work is changing and we have to change our rules to keep up. A significant portion of vulnerable workers have been immigrants, women, young workers and individuals in minority ethnic groups. These individuals often start in precarious jobs. In drafting this legislation, we built on reports from people like the United Way and the Law Society of Upper Canada, and we also consulted with 14 other provincial government ministries, as well as with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

We have proposed this bill because it's the right thing to do for vulnerable workers and for businesses. By acting to safeguard workers who need our protection and helping responsible, law-abiding businesses stay competitive, we are protecting Ontarians and working to strengthen our economy.

Our legislative proposals respond to these key recommendations in recent reports from our stakeholders, and they include:

- eliminating the \$10,000 cap on recovery of unpaid wages and increasing the period of recovery to two years for employees;

- making client employers who use temporary help agencies liable when agencies don't pay certain types of wages, encouraging those companies to use agencies that treat employees fairly;

- extending the Occupational Health and Safety Act coverage to unpaid co-op students, other unpaid learners and unpaid trainees; and

- prohibiting employers from recovering certain costs and seizing personal documents like passports from all foreign employees, not just live-in caregivers, by extending the application of the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals legislation to cover all foreign employees who come to Ontario under an immigration or foreign temporary employee program.

The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to 133,000 in 2013. It is fair, and our responsibility, to protect them, and now is the time to act. No one should ever have to surrender their passport or leave their country and come to Ontario because they are promised a job that doesn't exist, or be charged for inappropriate recruitment fees.

#### 1610

That is why the proposed legislation would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, 2009, that our government introduced and that was passed. We would amend this act to apply to all foreign employees in Ontario who are here through immigration or temporary foreign employee programs. This means foreign employees in Ontario would be protected from illegal recruitment fees and from having their passports or other documents withheld by their employers.

Under Bill 18, the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act would be extended to cover approximately 110,000 additional temporary foreign employees. It prohibits recruiters from charging any fees to the person,

either directly or indirectly. It prohibits the employer from recovery of recruitment and placement costs. Importantly, it prohibits reprisals against individuals for exercising their rights under the act.

It requires that the employer provide information sheets about the employee's rights under the act, and also requires employers and recruiters to maintain records. It will prohibit an employer or recruiter from taking possessions or property, including personal documents, from the employee. It contains no monetary limit on the recovery of monies pursuant to an order under the act, and it also provides a 42-month time limit on filing claims under the act.

Extending these protections to most foreign employees in Ontario will help ensure that these workers get treated fairly, regardless of occupation or skill level. In the debate yesterday, the member from Essex put it very well when he essentially said that we all believe here that when people come to Ontario to work, Mr. Speaker, we want them to be treated fairly and ensure that they have the same rights and responsibilities as residents here in Ontario. I'm very proud of these measures in the act.

As well, there are going to be changes to the Employment Standards Act with respect to the recovery of wages. There will be a removal of the \$10,000 cap for the recovery of wages. People work hard for their money; at the end of their shift they expect to be paid. As well, if they operate a business, they deserve to know that their competitor is not unfairly advantaged because he's not respecting the Employment Standards Act.

Right now, there are both time and monetary limits on recovering wages. By making it easier for employees to get money owed them—by proposing to remove the \$10,000 cap under the Employment Standards Act, and on the recovery of unpaid wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay—it means the employees will no longer be forced to pursue large claims in the courts, saving employees and businesses both time and money.

Mr. Speaker, you can imagine being a person who is working at minimum wage or just above and who has a case for recovery of wages because they were unfairly treated. It would be easy for that amount, over the period of a few years, to get up into the range of over \$10,000. It would be virtually impossible for them, without the assistance of somebody in the community, to take an employer to court. Some employers would be unfairly advantaged in that circumstance, so I think that this measure in the bill is very important and will go to level the playing field.

The legislation will also increase the time limit for recovery of wages through an order to pay under the Employment Standards Act to two years. We're doing this so older claims are dealt with fairly and employees get the money they're owed. We all believe that people should get paid for the work that they do.

We're the only jurisdiction in Canada that currently has a cap, and it's important for us to remove that right now, so vulnerable employees who have larger claims will be able to go forward with that.

Court proceedings can also be a disadvantage for small businesses, and this will be a savings to them as well.

One of the important things the legislation also does is require the employment standards handout to be given to all employees.

Now, having had a background in business and working in both organized and non-union shops, I know the difference between people understanding what their rights and responsibilities are. I think especially with young workers, vulnerable workers, workers who are earning minimum wage, they're very easily taken advantage of. I know in our own circumstance at home, our youngest son, James, had a job at a local gas station and was often asked—I wouldn't say "asked"; he was often told what he was going to do. Some of those things included double overnight shifts because somebody didn't show up—they didn't have an option—and working alone in those circumstances. So making sure that people, employees and employers, understand the rules is very important to making sure that that relationship works and that everyone is treated fairly.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also speaks to temporary help agencies, and there are provisions around joint and several liability which simply say that any business engaging a temporary help agency will be liable for wages that are unpaid by that agency. I think this levels the playing field. It encourages employers to use agencies who are scrupulous. It will ensure that those employees, the people who are vulnerable, the people who are missing their paycheck, will be fairly dealt with.

This, of course, builds on the legislation we introduced with regard to temporary help agencies in 2009 that made sure that employees were not unfairly prevented from being hired directly by agency clients and prohibited agencies from charging fees to workers for such things as resumé writing and interview preparation. It also requires agencies to provide employees with information about their rights under the Employment Standards Act.

Again, in yesterday's debate—I mentioned the member from Essex a couple of times, but he did say a couple of things that struck a chord with me in regards to extending health and safety initiatives of the Ministry of Labour to cover unpaid learners.

We know that workplaces can be dangerous places and that it's a perfectly reasonable thing to extend to those people who are in those workplaces the same protections that a paid employee has. Many of these students are young people. They're learning a job; it's an opportunity. It's very important that they understand their rights and their responsibilities to other workers in the workplace. It will also give, in the event of an unfortunate incident—and we heard of a few of those. We all know of a few of those in our communities where an unpaid learner is injured at work. This will give an opportunity for the ministry to be able to investigate. They can't do that right now. Again, I think that is just the right thing to do, it makes sense, and I'm glad that it's in the bill.



There was another issue that came up yesterday that was a matter of some debate, and that was in terms of the employment standards self-audits. Mr. Speaker, in order to proactively protect the rights of workers, the legislation will give the Ministry of Labour the authority to require employers to conduct self-audits to determine compliance with the Employment Standards Act. The intent of this proposal is to provide a tool to promote compliance with the ESA and expand the program's reach in a very significant way, in a way that is efficient and cost-effective. It's an important complement to inspections.

I want to just expand on that a little bit and say that the ability to comply, self-audits, will go a long way to create awareness. It would also go a long way to institute a sense that there is going to be enforcement. In many organizations we do health and safety audits. Those are things that are required in the workplace. They create an awareness around doing that, and I believe it is something that works hand in hand with enforcement. That alone will not force an employer who isn't complying to comply, but it is an important tool. I think it's important that it's in the bill. It's one piece of that puzzle.

1620

Again, to go back to one of the last changes in the Labour Relations Act, which is to strengthen the Labour Relations Act by proposing to reduce the collective agreement open period in the construction industry from three months to two, as a member put it very well yesterday, if you can't organize in those two months, maybe you shouldn't be organizing. I fully support this measure in the bill.

I look forward to the continuation of the debate this afternoon. I think this bill—again, I don't think it's too big a bite of the apple. To wrap up, I think the provisions around tying minimum wage to the consumer price index are fairly straightforward and simple. I think all of these measures that we've put in the bill we've debated before. One part of the bill has been through two other sessions before this. I think these are all timely things. It's important that we protect those workers who are most vulnerable in our communities and in our province.

I fully support this bill. I look forward to the continuation of the debate this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I am pleased to rise to comment on the 20-minute speech that was just given by the member opposite. I think there are a couple of things that we have to be careful of in this piece of legislation, and one has to do with the minimum wage. Certainly it's difficult to live on the minimum wage as it is right now, but it's still going to be difficult to live on the minimum wage as it is being proposed to increase.

We have to be careful with the fruit and vegetable industry in Ontario. They are importing food into this country that is directly competitive with the products that are grown in Ontario. They have rules and regulations that are different than ours. They can use pesticides that

we can't, in other countries; their labour force works for a lot less money than, certainly, what our labour force works for in Ontario. So we have to be very careful on the minimum wage in the agriculture industry, that we don't make them just remove their competitiveness in that sector.

The other issue that I will address, as I'm speaking on this bill in a number of minutes, will be the WSIB provisions in this bill. As my wife still operates her small business at home, I have some reservations about how the new WSIB rules are going to be applied concerning the agencies—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I see, Speaker, that we have an interruption in the House here right now, so I'm going to sit down and let you find that. We'll take it away. Thank you, Speaker.

**Interjection:** Saved by the bell.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you, member. Saved by the bell—saved by the bell for sure.

Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It is indeed an honour to stand and comment on my friend from Ottawa Centre and his comments on this bill. He concentrated much of what he had to say on the minimum wage. I don't necessarily disagree with everything he had to say, but I would say, when you talk about the minimum wage, when you talk about reducing poverty, the minimum wage is but a small—very important, but a small—piece of the puzzle when it comes to reducing poverty. I think what we need are more better-paying jobs. We need an affordable housing strategy. We need more money to increase access to public transit. We need to have safe and affordable daycare, so parents then can afford to go out and look for work and make money and bring it home without paying every cent of that back into child care. I'm very delighted to hear the federal NDP policy that they're proposing, once they form the next government in Ottawa, of \$15-a-day daycare. That should be supported in this House, because we all know the importance of good, safe and affordable child care.

When these people come home after earning more money—a good wage, a higher minimum wage—they can then go out and buy fresh, nutritional, Ontario-grown fruits and vegetables, and put a nutritious meal on the table for their family and for their loved ones. That's one of the benefits of having more money coming into the family, more money coming into the household income.

I think that what we have to do when we talk about the people who earn minimum wage and need more money—these aren't people who go out and buy RRSPs. These aren't people who have been doing financial planning for 20 years down the road. These are the people who will recirculate that money and put it right back into the economy—right back into the system, if you will, Speaker. That money will be used and reused, and all of us in Ontario will benefit.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I think, very clearly, that on June 12 this government was given a mandate to take a balanced approach to government. In that case, I believe that this bill does that. We have taken into account the people who need more money, and we've also taken into account that we cannot hurt businesses by doing so.

This will increase income for the most vulnerable, such as single parents, who have a hard time making ends meet when they're on minimum wage incomes, and also immigrants who have come to our country to work for us, to do special jobs. Also, in my riding there are seniors who have had to supplement their income by taking minimum wage jobs in order to supplement their retirement income.

This is a fair way to do it. There is a system put in place so that it will go along with the CPI, and there will be six months' notice for businesses. So the people earning the money will have some idea as to how much money they will be making and can plan around that. It is a fair and balanced approach to making people's lives—at least some better quality to their lives.

I urge everyone to support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further comments and questions? The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker, for allowing me to comment on the speech from the member from Ottawa South. I find it really interesting that this government, for the last six months or so, seems to focus continually on minimum wage jobs. I think we need a government in this province who will actually step forward and focus on well-paying middle-income jobs and creating the environment so that jobs will return to our province, so that people can actually afford a house, raise their children, have them go away to university and start their own lives.

This is a government who, in their time over the last 15 years, has destroyed 6,000 manufacturing jobs out of my riding through their policies of high energy rates, high taxation and just blowing the deficit every year—6,000 high-paying jobs, 6,000 jobs where people were making \$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000 or \$90,000 a year.

Now these people are left with nothing. What they're left with is the promise of this government to create more minimum wage jobs, jobs where they aren't able to raise a family, aren't able to pay for their kids to go to school and aren't able to enjoy life as people would like to do in this province. For this government to continually focus on minimum wage jobs—let's wake up over there and actually have some economic policy to create high-paying jobs for the people of this province.

Of note, though, with minimum wage jobs: I have talked to a local farm producer in our area who grows quite a bit of fruit. With the last minimum wage increase going forward, he has totally ended a whole crop. I think it was melons that he was growing. He can no longer actually afford to grow them and have them harvested under the increase in the minimum wage, and this is only going to compound further going down.

1630

Now, I'm not against raising the minimum wage up, but the rate at which it was raised sent shockwaves through the farming community. If there are ways to have better fruits and vegetables on the table at the end of the day, raising the minimum wage and causing farmers not to produce—I'm almost done, Speaker—the proper fruits and vegetables—in essence, we'll be bringing them in from Mexico and such at a higher price. They need to step forward and figure out what is going on.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** On a point of order: The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London put such emphasis on the word “south,” it reminded me that I made a reference to my friend the member from Ottawa Centre. I just wanted to correct my record. I should have said Ottawa South when I was making comments earlier. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. You are permitted to correct the record.

Now we'll go back to the member from Ottawa South for his two-minute response.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm a bit of a different size from the member from Ottawa Centre, so I should be somewhat recognizable.

I'd like to thank the members from Perth–Wellington, Windsor–Tecumseh, Barrie, and Elgin–Middlesex–London for their comments. It was unfortunate that that buzzer went off and we couldn't get the rest of the remarks with regard to the WSIB that the member from Perth–Wellington was going to make. I look forward to hearing those going forward in the debate.

To the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, thank you very much for correcting your record. I don't take any offence to that. I agree with you. We have to do whatever we can to get better-paying jobs. This discussion and debate over minimum wage is not where it's set; it's just how we continue to set that. We've debated and talked about it a lot. I think it's fairly straightforward that we all want better-paying jobs. You spoke in regards to child care and pensions, and I do want to point out that in terms of putting forward full-day learning, which is across Ontario, that is helping families with those costs of child care, especially those families of lower income. Again, the Ontario pension plan is designed to help those who don't have a workplace pension, often minimum wage workers.

I'd like to thank the member from Barrie for her remarks as well.

And to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, I appreciate his comments very much as well, too—the need for high-paying jobs and how we should be focused on that. I did find it very interesting that he speaks from the side of the House that wanted to get rid of 100,000 good-paying jobs. That's the record. I just wanted to point that out.

I appreciate it very much. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you very much. I'd like to thank all of those who participated in this debate.



I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mrs. Martins assumes ballot item number 7 and Mr. Milczyn assumes ballot item number 44.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's great to be recognized, Speaker. Thank you very much.

I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 18 today, although I want to preface it by saying that the Premier—there was a story in the *Globe and Mail* about her having this ambitious agenda for the fall. One of the things she was doing was wrapping a lot of bills that were in the previous Parliament. They're being reintroduced into this Parliament, but they're being rolled into other bills, so two-for-the-price-of-one or three-for-the-price-of-one kind of thing. It's kind of a special going on here, except that the opposition doesn't get to vote on each portion of the bill; they only get to vote once. She's creating a number of omnibus bills. That's a big word—not a big word but it has a big meaning. I don't want to be quite so exact about that because they're not stacked three feet high or anything, but they are rolling other items into bills that didn't exist before, such as Bill 15, which now has the towing regulation changes in it that were in a bill that was, I think, Bill 178 in the last Parliament. In this bill, of course, they've brought the minimum wage issue into some labour standards changes as well.

The challenge for opposition always is—it's like the budget. You listen to the guys on the other side—and I don't mean specifically "guys"; I mean the folks. You listen to the folks on the other side, and of course we voted against the budget. I'm proud to have done so, proud to have done so, and my people in my riding must have agreed with me, because just as the member for Barrie says that she believes the government must have this mandate to do whatever they want because they got elected, well, I no more believe that than I believe that the people in my riding gave me a mandate to stand against everything you do.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** But you do.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I do not. There are those occasions where I actually support what you're doing.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** What are those? Give me one example.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'll come up with an example. I just might have to dip into the history books here a little bit.

However, the point I'm making is, just as I voted against the budget, there were specific items in that budget that I might have liked to have voted for. However, I only get one vote. On any bill, there may be some components of a bill that I would like to vote in favour of, but if the bill in its entirety is not one I support, then I have to vote against the bill. It's a little game that gets played by the government. They try to inject the poison pill into this, or take it out of that, kind of thing, Speaker,

and hope that they'll box the members of the opposition into feeling they're forced to go one way or the other, depending upon the need of the government at the time.

I think that while there's an awful lot of stuff in this bill that we support—and I think our labour critic, the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, yesterday articulated it very well that there are many, many things in this bill that we support. It's not that we are diametrically opposed to any part of the bill, but we do think it requires some explaining—a little splainin' to do.

I want to touch on that, because it would have been great if the government would have had a separate piece of legislation, as has been the practice in the past. When they've introduced minimum wage legislation in the past, it has been done as a separate piece of legislation. It would have been good if they had done that. It would have given us an opportunity to debate specifically on that issue.

So let's talk about the minimum wage issue. Some of our members have spoken about how perhaps it would have been nice to have a separate agricultural sector wage scale, if you want to call it that, because we're trying to be competitive with an awful lot of jurisdictions. Agriculture is the kind of business that you work some long, long hours in stretches, because you've got to make hay when the sun shines, as the old story goes. It requires, sometimes, a different look. You have to look at it from a different perspective than you might some other jobs that are specific that you're going to do this job, work this many hours that day, and continuously repeat that over the period of time that you have that job.

The other thing is the retail sector. It's very competitive. The member from Ottawa South would know that there's a new retail Tanger mall opening up in Kanata. That's going to change the retail landscape in Ottawa and, in fact, in much of eastern Ontario, because these things have an impact. So we have to be cognizant at all times about what the environment around the business sector is with respect to what we do in reference to enforcing a wage scale on them.

I know when this debate was going on earlier, and I'll give the government credit—are you listening, the member from Barrie? I'll give the government credit that they didn't listen to all of the protestations from the third party, which wanted to see an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$14 an hour and incremental increases thereafter.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That would have been, quite frankly, damaging.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** We didn't say that.

1640

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, they can explain in their hits what they actually did say. If you want to question me, feel free. You'll have two minutes later on.

Anyway, they definitely wanted to see a more accelerated increase in the minimum wage. That would have been very, very challenging for retail businesses. I know

the ones in my riding would have been significantly hurt by it.

It's not just the fact that it increases the minimum wage, but what it does is, it puts pressure on every other wage within that organization. Because when the people who are making above the minimum wage are made aware that the minimum wage has gone up, they immediately want their wages to be adjusted commensurately. They want to have the same treatment. So what it does is inflationary.

Some of the statistics that my colleague from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington brought forward yesterday were very, very interesting. I'll say one thing: When it comes to the numbers, he does his homework. We saw that the 15-to-19 age group makes up 42% of the people that make minimum wage. That's the way it was designed, so that entry-level positions would start at the bottom of the ladder. You can't make the guy the CEO of the company day one on the job—unless you came as a CEO from some other company. You've got to start somewhere. But what we found was, they only make up 4.9% of the workforce but over 42% of the minimum wage jobs. He also found that the average wage in that age group—even though the legislated minimum wage was lower in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland, the average wage actually paid to the people in that group was much higher.

What that tells you, Speaker, is that Ontario is lagging behind in the creation of good-paying jobs. The challenge to the government is not simply—you can't just legislate. You can pay a minimum wage of \$30 an hour, if you want, but that will just destroy your economy. Everybody could make a million dollars a year. The only thing you could ever do is spend the money at home, though, because you couldn't spend it anywhere else. You couldn't trade with anybody. We live in a global market today. The world is smaller than ever and you've got to be aware of what is going on all around you. When you make these changes within your own borders, you have to be aware of how that affects your ability to work outside your borders.

What the government has failed to do is to create those jobs that actually pay more. In fact, Ontario has the highest percentage of workers working for the minimum wage. So they're not doing their job. What they need to be doing is helping create the circumstances, helping create the environment that encourages employers to create those higher-paying jobs. Our economy is driven much by government policy. And they're failing in that regard. If they were creating those jobs, it wouldn't matter what the minimum wage was. If the unemployment rate was not higher than the national average for, what, 96 months consecutively here in the province of Ontario, we'd have a competitive environment for jobs and for workers here that would naturally drive up the wages for everyone. Because if there are 10 people looking for 10 jobs, it's a perfect balance; but if there are five people only looking for 10 jobs, you're going to have to pay more to get somebody take those jobs.

You're going to have to pay more because you don't have enough people looking for them.

We'd never likely be in that place in Ontario. But if we were in a position where there was more competition for the jobs, more competition for the people looking for the jobs, that would naturally drive up the amount of money we would have to pay for them. The free agent in the NHL, the guy that scores the 50 goals? He pretty well writes his own ticket, because it's really hard to find a lot of 50-goal scorers out there.

In the minimum wage market in Ontario, we find people that we can put in those jobs every day because there are so many people out of work in this province. The government should be looking at themselves and asking themselves, "Are we actually doing what we need to do to create the environment or help create"—governments don't create jobs; I'm not suggesting that. But you have to set the foundation. You have to incubate the conditions, so that everybody out there who believes that this is the place to establish a business, to become, maybe not wealthy, but at least comfortable—if this is the place, then it's your job as government to try to help that along and maybe start the process a little bit.

Stop worrying about some of the things you people worry about all the time—the rinky-dinky stuff, the stuff that you like to make headlines in the papers with—and start thinking about the jobs, not just for the people today, but for the generation following us. These young pages sitting in front of the Speaker here: What kind of economy are we going to have in Ontario when they hit that market? What kind of opportunities are they going to have for long, fulfilling careers here in the province of Ontario, ones where they can be satisfied—when the day comes when they're going to pack it in, announce their retirement or whatever—that they'll have been able to work in an environment that allows them to have provided for a comfortable retirement in the next days of their lives?

I want to talk a little about—oh my goodness, that clock. Is that clock running fast? Can somebody check that clock? I think it might be running fast, Speaker. I want to talk about another little section of the bill, and that is with regard to—I just have to pull that bill out here for a second, and get my glasses on. I do wear them for reading, you know.

Oh, yes: the two-month open periods to establish a union in a shop, two months to organize. It's not a bad idea; the member from Ottawa South rightfully indicated that, if you can't organize in two months, maybe it's not there for you. But it goes back to some of the other changes you made back in 2003 or 2004—card-based certification. The way you did it, all you have to do is have a majority of the employees in the shop sign a card, and that shop is now a union shop.

I'll tell you a little thing about what happened in Arnprior. On the 30th of December last year, 2013, Lorne's Electric in Arnprior was visited by a fellow from the IBEW, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. We heard about the boss that lives in



Shawville, Quebec; he was donating money to Liberal candidates in the election, and somebody caught him. That's a no-no, Mr. Speaker, but I wonder why he was donating money to Liberal candidates—perhaps because Liberal candidates were ensuring that his agenda would be furthered. Anyway, it was illegal for him to do that, and he was caught.

Anyway, on the 30th of December, on a day that the shop was actually officially closed, there happened to be three employees there. Coincidental? I don't know, but down comes the organizer from the IBEW. He raps on the door, and two of those people signed a card. Eric Glaes's business, Lorne's Electric, was now unionized, a business that had been in existence in Arnprior for 70 years.

On September 25, Eric Glaes closed the doors on Lorne's Electric. Yes, they were going to work with him, all right. In that period of time, his expenses went up by over \$450,000. He closed the doors. He's 54 years old, and now he doesn't know what the next step of his life is going to be.

You have to ask yourself—on December 30, two days away from New Year's, he is visited by, in my opinion, a predator from the IBEW, who unionizes his shop, getting two people. Between 35 and 40 people work there, but because two people signed a card, he now became unionized. He'd never had any trouble with his employees, but now the shop is closed.

1650

The same thing happened a couple of months later to another business, in Killaloe, and I haven't spoken to that gentleman about whether or not I can speak about his business, so I'm not going to give you any names. But I did speak to Mr. Glaes. In fact, I have an email from him. I could read it out, but in the interests of time, I'm not sure that I will.

But it gives you some indication of what can happen when a government throws itself in with an organization without considering what the consequences may be. The card-based certification, which we voted against—I'm proud to say that I voted against it when that legislation came up here in I guess it would have been 2004 because I only got here in the fall of 2003. I don't think it would have been voted on before we left for the Christmas recess. But that's what can happen. You know the old saying, "Be careful what you wish for"? That was a pretty sad end to a very, very successful business in my riding, in the town of Arnprior.

I'd have to ask the folks on the other side, was that really the intention of bringing in that card-based certification? I know it put the unions on board for you guys in the 2003 election, because you made that promise, but were you really wanting to put people out of business? Is that what you hoped for? Was that what you expected?

That's going to happen a whole lot more. I mean, the IBEW has become extremely aggressive in wanting to ensure that every shop out there is unionized. Well, the one thing it will do if it happens—we want to talk about inflation? I can guarantee you this: That poor pensioner

living on an old age widow's pension in small-town Ontario is not an electrician, and she ain't going to be able to do it by herself. When she has to hire that electrician and all the shops are controlled by the IBEW, she's going to pay a lot more than she used to.

What about that poor lady who lives by herself and barely gets by, wasn't a member of the workforce herself, widowed, trying to pay her hydro bill? I guess we could talk about that too, couldn't we?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I don't know what it has to do with this bill.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You know, a bill is a bill. I say that to Mr. Potts—oh, I'm sorry, the member for Beaches—East York. I could be the Speaker someday, eh? That's something for me to look forward to. What's the minimum wage for the Speaker? I'll be looking for an increase.

Anyway, there is nothing that is just all by itself in this world; everything is connected. So when the Liberals think that they can do something—"Look at that. We've solved the problem, and we've got those folks on our side now. Oh, we're so happy, because in the next election they're all going to be voting for us"—well, you've got to think about some of those problems that you create with those decisions. That's what you need to think of before you pass this bill or any other bill. You're in a majority, you're going to get your way, but think about it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** The comment of my friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke—he's a colourful character, and he brings great entertainment value to the House at times. He does represent friends and family members of mine up in the Pembroke area. I'm not sure they all voted for him. However, he is their elected representative, and sometimes he does stretch the truth. He was wrong—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would ask the—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** If you want me to withdraw, I'll withdraw, although you should have—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I withdraw, Speaker.

The member said that the NDP policy was a \$14 minimum wage. He's absolutely wrong. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our policy three years ago was \$11. This time we said we'd make it \$12 and index it—nothing about \$14 in the NDP policy book.

This is supposed to be the kinder, gentler party that we're facing. Instead, we're going back, at times, to driving wedge issues and making accusations that just aren't true. Now we're talking about anti-union propaganda. I almost got the feeling you were going back on your former leader's withdrawal of the right-to-work state in Ontario. Remember, there was so much pressure back then that he dropped it off the table—"Oh, I won't

talk about that"—and then he propped up the 100,000 jobs: "I'm going to take those away." But you're not talking about that. You're blaming the IBEW, a good union, a strong union that represents good, high-paying jobs and people that work hard for a living, and you're knocking them, and yet you should be talking over there about how to improve working conditions in Ontario.

Please, Speaker, at some point ask the gentleman from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to correct his statement, his wild and crazy accusation, that the NDP policy called for a \$14 minimum wage, because we did not.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'd like to speak to the proposed Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, presented and spoken to by my colleague MPP Kevin Flynn.

We cannot build a strong economy and fair society in Ontario without standing up for our workers. I'm pleased to say that our government is committed to standing up for Ontario's workers with this legislation. It strengthens workplace protections for workers and increases fairness for businesses that play by the rules.

This proposed legislation covers a lot of ground, but at its heart, it is about taking important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheque they earned at the end of the day. It also protects our most vulnerable workers from dangerous workplace situations, and it increases competitiveness for businesses who play by the rules.

Now, removing the \$10,000 cap on unpaid wages is an important step. This gives workers the support they need. And the move to now be able to claim up to two years ensures workers get the support when they need it. Protecting our foreign workers through things like translations and access to other supports encourages fairness, justice and compassion. Finally, extending occupational health and safety to co-op students is the right thing to do for our young people.

I'd like to say that when it comes to poverty reduction, this is a key piece in this legislation. In reference to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, I'd like to say that increasing the minimum wage is a first and important step towards reducing poverty. How much a person makes sets the bar in terms of support and income for the family.

This legislation is definitely about building a stronger Ontario and economy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to congratulate the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for updating us on the status of businesses in his riding that, due to unforeseen circumstances from this Liberal government and the policies they bring forward—and the destruction of small businesses throughout Ontario, I'd like to take forward the one statement he made, "incubate conditions." I think that was a great statement: Incubate conditions in order to create the environment for our businesses to grow and invest in Ontario.

But if you look at what this government has done over the last few years, I don't think they're fully incubating any conditions to bring forth small business or high-paying jobs into this province. You look at the College of Trades that they brought forward, which is killing the many trade jobs throughout the province. Most of our young kids are heading out west because they can't get the apprenticeship ratios. Hydro expenses are huge. Hydro expenses have gone through the roof—

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Name one that's been lost because of the College of Trades. Not one job has been lost—not one.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Order, please.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I know the Minister of Economic Development is a little half-cocked today, but we'll listen to him go off again, as a chicken with its head cut off—but we look at the hydro rates that have shot through the roof throughout this province. Small businesses can't get ahead with the high hydro rates. And look at the pension plan that this government wants to bring forward. It's going to devastate small business to add another tax to their payroll line. It's not going to help create jobs at all.

1700

As we go forward, this government isn't incubating the proper conditions for job growth, and they're bringing forth bills as they have put forward today. More small businesses, like the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke said, are going to lose their jobs. Small businesses are going to be totally wiped out throughout rural Ontario.

I hope this government shakes their head. They have four years to fix this problem. Maybe they can step forward today and start creating the legislation necessary to bring forth change in our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'd like to add to my colleague's comments around the NDP. Not only did we talk about the \$11 wage a few years ago, in 2011, but we also talked about taking into consideration the small business tax. We were going to reduce that as well, so that was also part of the platform.

I also want to talk about IBEW. The IBEW workers in my riding just built a brand new arena—did all the electrical work there. It was built on time. It was built on budget, with not one safety violation, and nobody got hurt. These are very talented workers who provide a great service. Are they compensated? Absolutely, but they do an incredible job.

We just had the opening there last week: 6,000 people there watching the Niagara IceDogs play. Everybody is proud of what happened there. Not only that; they put some of their sponsorship back into the hockey team, back into the community. That's what the workers did.

I want to talk about the entry-level positions that he talked about—minimum wage. We can recall, for eight years under the Conservatives, that it was at \$6.75. They never touched the minimum wage for eight years.



I want to tell you: We live in one of the richest countries in the world, we live in one of the richest provinces in the world, and government plays a role in policy and how it works. What happened with our manufacturing sector, which I represented for a number of years, as our Canadian dollar went up because of the petrodollar, and as our manufacturers got hurt because of it? Our plants, right across the country, started to close, in particular in the province of Ontario. It was because of our high dollar. They went elsewhere.

When you take a look at what the high dollar did—it also hurt our tourism. I'm from Niagara. Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie, Niagara Falls: We depend on tourism, and what happened is that, as the dollar went up, the tourists didn't come.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Now back to the member for two minutes for his final response.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd like to thank the members from Windsor-Tecumseh, Halton, Elgin-Middlesex-London and Niagara Falls for their comments. I'm fairly certain that, based on the comments today, I have scuttled any chance of being the next leader of the NDP here in Ontario. However, I'm still hoping that some of the relatives of the member from Windsor-Tecumseh might vote for me in the next election.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Not unless you correct your record.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, I'm jeopardizing that as well.

Apparently I may be wrong. Maybe it wasn't the policy of the NDP, but it certainly was the policy of one of their front-benchers here to have an immediate increase to \$14 an hour in the minimum wage. But anyway, we're just splitting hairs there. The point is about how we actually create a stronger economy.

To the member from Niagara Falls: This is not about the individual members of the IBEW. This is about the right to go in and unionize a company when there are only 10% of the workforce even there—less than 10% of the workforce in attendance. You just wouldn't allow that, Mr. Speaker. Every member should have the opportunity to vote.

I want to point that out: When that vote was taking place, three people made the decision for the company. There's no scheduled election, like we have here in Ontario. There's no opportunity, even, for the other workers in that company. They never, ever have an opportunity to vote themselves. That vote happened on December 30, and that was the end of it for Mr. Glahs at Lorne's Electric.

So let's just keep things in perspective here. That kind of law is wrong. Every member of that organization should have the right to vote, just as every citizen in the province of Ontario has the right to vote in a general election. Whether they exercise that right or not is their prerogative.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate? I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank you for giving me the time to speak to Bill 18.

Coming from Niagara, any bill that touches on the local industries and the small businesses is of great importance to my riding. This is the same of any bill that affects the lives of working people here in the province of Ontario.

With that in mind, I'd like to point out that this piece of legislation does do some things that I think are good. They're good for business and they're good for workers alike. I think there are measures here that we as New Democrats see as a step in the right direction.

But the bill also needs to go further. Let's start with the minimum wage. We've spent a lot of time on that this afternoon. I've spoken about this before. Bill 18 regulates that every year the minimum wage is set to the rate of inflation and reviewed every five years. This is a step in the right direction and sets out to help working people in the province of Ontario.

However, I'd like to see more action taken sooner. As many of you know, the number of people over the age of 35 who are working for minimum wage has increased around 10% in the last decade. That doesn't even begin to touch the young people here in Ontario who are working for minimum wage.

Those are the kinds of people who would benefit in the future from legislation that brings minimum wage in this province to a standard of living. Regulating it based on inflation is a good thing to combat increased costs of living, and so is reviewing the wage. But more needs to be done, and it needs to be done sooner.

Coming from Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie, where industry is heavily based on the tourist season, we also need a strong, practical plan to implement increasing the minimum wage. We need to make sure small business has the time to assess the wage increases and have their input heard. My riding is full of businesses that would support paying a higher minimum wage, as long as governments make sure that the proper steps are taken to account for it.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding I heard stories every day from my constituency office, stories from people they call the "working poor"; that is, people who work full-time jobs and still live in poverty. There are people who just want to work hard and live a good life. These are the same people who need the province to take a deeper look at the minimum wage, and quickly.

The members opposite have concluded that an \$11-an-hour wage is good for now. I believe there are reasonable steps, and a plan, that can bring the wage to \$12 soon without negatively affecting our local businesses. For the people of Ontario working at minimum wage, that is a big difference.

A recent report—I think this is important for my colleagues on both sides here to listen to—by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that raising the minimum wage does not result in higher rates of unemployment. The economist behind that study encouraged the government to raise the minimum wage. If more

people have more purchasing power, it actually means more jobs, not less. I think that's an important fact. Like I said, this legislation is a step in the right direction, but not quite far enough.

There are also issues around temporary foreign workers in the province of Ontario. The number of these types of workers is growing, from 91,000 in 2008 to 130,000 today. Many of these workers are subject to long hours and denied many standards that workers from Ontario get. The government needs to make sure that these workers are given the respect they deserve. These are people, too, people who have the right to a safe and fair workplace.

Making sure we end massive recruitment fees is a good thing. All too often, workers are forced to rely on loans that are too large to manage, just so they can have the right to come here to work. More has to be done for these workers.

Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that employers who hire foreign nationals are trustworthy and follow the rules. The government can make sure that the hiring of these workers is regulated and properly done. This will put an end to the unfair fees being imposed on migrant workers, who can't afford them, and make sure they are properly complaint-processed in case any worker in this province is treated unfairly. The committee reviewing this bill should consider putting it in language that allows foreign nationals working in Ontario to have access to proper channels of immigration and proper social benefits that come from being here in Ontario.

1710

This bill goes on to address some of the issues that exist around temp agencies—workers who are from right here in Ontario. In my riding of Niagara Falls, people are forced to turn to temporary agencies because they have no other choice. Instead of finding safe, decent and good-paying jobs, they're forced to take on jobs with companies that only offer temporary work. This is a major problem here.

We have companies that have a shortage of skilled workers, skilled labour. I spoke with the building trades and the skilled trades recently and they're all saying the same thing. Airbus Helicopters, which just celebrated their anniversary in Fort Erie, is a great example. They're a major helicopter manufacturer based in Fort Erie. They provide jobs for the town and the people who live there and they give back to their community.

They've even said they've had issues finding workers and people with the right skills to match that plant. If we've got young people out of work in the province, we shouldn't be shuffling them off to temporary work agencies or minimum wage jobs. The province should be supporting them to get an education and the skills they need and give them the support they require to find these highly skilled, good-paying jobs.

Young people need to be given the support and encouragement to go on to become apprentices. I'm a great example of that. As a young man, I was in shop classes. I was learning skilled trades that gave me the tools that I

needed to work in the auto industry. I lasted there for 40 years. Not once did I get hurt. I have all my limbs; I have everything. But it started from taking trades in high school. I used those tools to make a career, a very good one, one that pays good wages, that has got good benefits, that has got a pension plan, and it was all because of the education system we had in the 1970s. I'm showing my age here, but that's okay. It is what it is.

I want to see the young people of Ontario have these same chances and opportunities. We've got schools in the province that are closing. We can have the debate all day on whether we should be closing our schools in rural Ontario, in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We can have that debate. I can disagree with it. But I can tell you, we could utilize the school spaces to teach our young people trades. Instead of closing the school, utilize that infrastructure that we currently have today in the community and make it the hub of the community again and put trades in those schools and have them learn that, because that's where the jobs of future are. We can even help schools open by using them for that purpose. It benefits everyone. It benefits the community, it benefits the province, it benefits my kids, it benefits my grandkids. It's so easy to do; why are we not doing it? If we care about our kids, we should take a serious look at doing that.

We can't have our young people being given co-ops and internships where they aren't safe and they're not paid. We're seeing students in this province working incredible hours and not being compensated. What's even worse is the fact that they're being exposed to dangerous work without proper training.

Not too long ago, a 17-year-old co-op student died in Niagara. He was doing his co-op, gaining the skills he needed to get a career, when he was killed on the site. Parents in this province should never have to worry about their children not coming home from a co-op assignment. The province needs to act to make sure our young people, our young workers, our interns, our co-op students are given the support they need. They need to be properly compensated for the work they do, but more importantly, they need to make sure it's being done safely.

This bill touches on temporary workers. Right now in this province, 18% of our workforce is considered temporary work. In some places, it's lower. In places like Brantford, it's around 21% to 22%. That's one in five workers, one in five workers who can't say they have job security. Yes, it's true that there are major issues with temporary work legislation and we need to address it, but it's also true we have a jobs crisis.

The Niagara Falls riding is unfortunately such a case. In a place that was once the industrial heart of Ontario, manufacturing jobs are disappearing. They have left people from Niagara turning to temporary work agencies. There's a lot the government can do today—today—to fix this problem. They can cut hydro rates and insurance rates for Ontarians and make life more affordable. The province can invest in industry to make Niagara the engine in the growth of the province.



Mr. Speaker, industry isn't coming back to Niagara Falls for two reasons: the cost of the dollar that went up and hydro rates. If we bring hydro rates down, we can bring industry back to Niagara. What we're seeing today is that the dollar is coming down. I talked about the dollar for a long time while I was president of my local union. As the dollar went up to \$1, \$1.02, and one time it reached \$1.10, manufacturers were leaving our province. Today, it's down to 88 cents. I believe it should probably be somewhere between 84 and 86 cents, which will get manufacturers—if we put the right systems in place, manufacturers will come back and Niagara can grow again, and, more importantly, Ontario will grow again. If we act today, we can put people back into decent and secure jobs.

There are lots of things I've mentioned the province can do to help build Niagara as well.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** We have a point of order. I recognize the member from Beaches—East York.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It's my understanding the member should be speaking to the bill in front of him and not, as much as we appreciate his updating us on the economic development of the region—we know it's important, but he should be speaking to the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank you. I'll just remind the member to continue to speak to the bill, please.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I believe I am, but I appreciate his comments.

There are lots of other things I've mentioned that the province can do to help Niagara as well. We can bring daily GO train service, we can build our hospitals using local workers, local supplies, local trades, get our young people back to work. I believe that's what this is talking about. How do we make sure there is a secure, prosperous Ontario?

When we don't properly deal with the jobs crisis, we run into offshoot problems, like temporary workers—I believe that's in the bill as well—and their safety. When they take on these jobs, they're not greeted with the safety standard that every worker in Ontario deserves. Now, we have some major issues regarding worker safety in this province; there's no doubt about it. We certainly have issues, major issues, when it comes to temporary workers.

The issue is simple. We need stronger laws in this province which mandate companies to provide proper education for workers, for our young people. The idea of having a good-paying job can sometimes attract them to dangerous work. We've seen time and time again that our young people in this province are incredibly dedicated. They're talented. They are dedicated. It's really unbelievable how hard they work. They just need an opportunity. Young people take on these jobs. They're excited and happy to be working, and after you give them the proper training to make sure they come home safely.

1720

They aren't told about proper safety standards or the right to refuse unsafe work. They aren't trained properly, and they're thrown right into the deep end. That's when accidents happen. These are avoidable, but these accidents leave our workers injured, sometimes without limbs, and sometimes they die.

As my colleagues mentioned yesterday, companies are asking the question—I think this is important—how much would the training cost? The real question they should ask is, how much will it cost when a worker is injured on the job? These employers need to realize that there are major costs when it comes to WSIB and benefits. If the employee gets injured on the job, it is far higher than properly training them in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, we saw this happen in Kitchener last month. In fact, my fellow member here yesterday from Kitchener—Waterloo is doing a great job to make sure this never happens again. I want to commend her for that. Eighteen workers fell to their deaths last year. That's 18 families from Ontario whose lives have been shattered because workers aren't trained properly and they aren't given proper education. The government has the power to end this by imposing stricter regulations right here in this bill.

There is more the government can do for these workers. If the government wanted to ensure there was secure and safe employment available in Ontario, why are you making it harder and harder to organize?

I'll go to my conclusion so I don't run out of time.

There's nothing in the previous two bills that talks about unionization. Never mind all the other benefits that come with having a stable and secure unionized job; we can drastically improve safety in the workplace if we invest in workers' rights.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying this: This bill is a combination of two previous bills, Bill 146 and Bill 165. I hope that when it comes to committee, the members will remember the criticisms that we have levelled at this particular bill and include them here. This bill is something the committee can improve on and truly use to make a difference in workers' lives right across the province of Ontario.

I care very deeply for every working person in this province. I want nothing more than to see every working family have access to decent, well-paying, safe work here in the province of Ontario. No one should go to work in the morning and never return home—no one.

There's a chance here for real fairness, a chance to make sure that workers are paid a fair wage for the work they have done, a chance to make sure workers have a fair knowledge of when their pay is coming. There's room here to make sure that workers have a fair chance to work in a safe workplace right here in the province of Ontario.

I don't want to see people work for minimum wage and continue to struggle to pay their bills. I don't want to see young people get roped into jobs without proper training. I don't want to see our working men and women

get lost in the system and get injured on the job. I want to see people have access to the standards they deserve. This bill begins to address these issues, but it could do more. I hope the members opposite will take this into consideration. I'm not opposed to anything that gives our workers more rights, especially those who have fallen through the system because of definitions.

I'm glad to see the loopholes closed and to see more options given to our injured workers.

Thank you very much, Speaker, for the time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Niagara Falls. We have comments and questions.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I want to thank the member from Niagara Falls for his comments. The times when he was speaking about this bill, he was actually quite eloquent in his support for many of the reforms and initiatives that are contained in this bill. I was particularly moved by his comment about young people who go out to get training, to get their first experience. This bill provides them more protection in the workplace: to ensure that there are safe conditions, to ensure that employers are liable for the safety of young people in the workplace. I'm very happy that the member from Niagara Falls recognizes this and supports this.

I do agree with the member from Niagara Falls that it is not the goal of this government to ensure that there are more minimum wage jobs, but it is the goal of this government to ensure that those people who do have minimum wage jobs have more money to take home to look after themselves and their families, that they have more rights in the workplace to ensure that they get paid the money they are owed and that that workplace will be safer.

I do look forward to other comments from the member from Niagara Falls and other members about how they can assist our government in making workplaces even safer. But it's clear from the member's comments that there is broad support for these initiatives to protect the earned wages of workers, to improve safety in the workplace for young people, to protect the most vulnerable workers in this province. This is something that all members of this Legislature, I believe, do support, and I trust they will support it with their votes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm certainly interested in the speech from the member from Niagara Falls.

One of the comments I get from businesses in my riding—from quite a number of businesses—is, “I wish government would get out of our way and let us make money.” That's what they're asking for, “Get out of our way,” because every once in a while, some rule change or some regulation comes along and they have to deal with all these ministries. If you're not big enough at times—you know, you can't hire somebody to go through all the rules and regulations to see what you want. You start getting into a little bit of trouble because you have building officials to deal with, you have MTO, whatever, all these different things.

In fact, one chap on the outside of Stratford builds manure tanks. It's a very big business. He sells to China, he sells to Europe, wherever else, and his last comment to me when he got into a bit of a kerfuffle with one of the agencies of the government was, “Why would anybody do business in Ontario?” He said, “I would never start a business up in Ontario right now because of what's going on,” because of all the rules and regulations, red tape and whatever else.

If businesses don't have to spend so much money and so much time on this type of thing, that's more money to go to their workers. That's more money to go to the workers. Maybe we wouldn't be having this talk about the minimum wage, which does not solve our poverty problem in this province. It doesn't solve the poverty problem in our province. It's good-paying jobs that solve the poverty problem here.

I think governments have to listen to that. They have to listen to the businesses that are telling them, “Get out of our way. We know how to make money here. Leave us alone. We'll work safe and whatever else, but we're getting tired of the red tape and the fooling around we have to do to do business in Ontario.”

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to congratulate the member for Niagara Falls on his comments and his obvious passion for his community and his advocacy for workers in Niagara Falls and across the province.

I was really pleased to hear him talk about the report that was just released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, about the relationship between minimum wage policies and employment in provinces across Canada. That report analyzed data over a 20-year period, from 1983 to 2012, so this is a very rich source of evidence for us as legislators to use as we are considering minimum wage policies. That analysis found no evidence whatsoever that there was any correlation between higher minimum wage levels and employment in either direction.

1730

Minimum wage is not going to bring down the Ontario economy, but it is an important tool. It is one important tool in the tool box of things that governments can do to address the needs of the lowest-wage workers in our economy.

We know that almost one in 10 Ontario workers is in a minimum wage job; 60% of those are women. Introducing policies that are going to help women, that are going to increase the earnings they can take home to support their families by indexing minimum wage to cost of living is an important initiative for government.

We also know that these policies will assist racialized workers, recent immigrants in particular, who are also highly overrepresented in minimum wage jobs.

Again, I support the government's initiative on minimum wage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? The member from Ottawa—Orléans.



**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Bonjour, monsieur le Président. Merci beaucoup. I would like to thank the members from Niagara Falls, London West, Perth—Wellington and my colleague for all the comments.

I do think that it's time to stop playing politics with the minimum wage. When you look at the people at the lower end of the pay scale, we've seen that they deserve the very best. What they need is basically to have the quality of life that they deserve. This is what this bill is all about: It's to help the people at the lower end of the pay scale get a minimum wage.

Also, if passed, let's not forget that we're going to be looking at Ontario's consumer price index, and we're going to help them, from a business perspective to the employee, make it more fair. I've heard "fair" so many times: "Make it fair to the people." This is what this bill is all about. It's to make it fair for the people of Ontario.

Also, when I think about the youth—we talked about youth. We're talking about how we're going to protect them. This is something so sensitive. I've been working with the youth for numerous years as a business person in Ottawa—Orléans. We're going to be looking at extending the definition of "worker" to include unpaid workers, such as the interns, so more youths will be protected by this bill.

One thing very, very close to my heart in part of this bill, and I don't think it's been mentioned today, is the fact that our Employment Standards Act will be available in more than 23 languages if we pass this bill. We know, as Franco-Ontarians—I'm very proud of being Franco-Ontarian—this is not easy.

I am most pleased to talk about this bill and to ask the members of the House to pass it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Now we'll go back to the member for his final two-minute response.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I do appreciate the comments by my colleagues, particularly talking about young people. I think if there's one thing we can all agree on, it's that we all want the best for our kids and our grandkids. How do we get there? The minimum wage, obviously, is a start, but I think I was very clear during the presentation that it certainly doesn't go far enough and it's not going there quickly enough to help our people.

To talk about the businesses and get out of their way—that's an interesting comment: "Why would they invest in Ontario?" I always find that to be one of the more interesting comments. It's been said a number of times when I've talked to people. Here's why they come to Ontario: We're highly trained; we're highly skilled; our productivity is high; we go and do a great job every day we go to work; we work hard; and we have health care costs that are covered. There are a lot of reasons why businesses would set up shop in the province of Ontario and in Canada.

I understand there may be some things they don't like, and we can always have those discussions, but make no mistake about it: People are investing in the province of Ontario and they're investing in Canada because of our workers. There's no doubt about that.

You talk about poverty. Is this going to fix the problem of poverty? Absolutely not. But you know what? When you talk about poverty, you have to talk about the end result of poverty and how much it costs our system. People who live in poverty have obesity problems. They have mental health problems. We have an obligation collectively here to find a way to try to alleviate poverty in the province of Ontario.

I want to close by saying this: Collectively, we have to work together to make sure that nobody is left behind. What I'm saying about the bill—we agree to a lot of the stuff in the bill. We just believe that when you get it into committee we can have more discussions and make it a better bill than it is today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the speakers for their open debate. Now I'd ask for further debate.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon to support Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour.

As you know, our government is committed to protecting workers in Ontario. That means strengthening the workplace and protecting workers, especially those we deem vulnerable, like foreign workers, as well as our young people in co-ops. But at the same time, we also want to make sure that we have fair business practices and that everyone plays by the same rules.

The proposed legislation, if passed, covers a lot of ground. I'm going to go through different parts of the bill. There are five statutes within the bill that the minister is proposing to amend, and I'm going to go through them so that the audience watching today can understand what we're trying to do.

First and foremost, the bill, under schedule 1, talks about the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act. In this particular schedule, the government of Ontario is proposing that foreign workers are protected by the same employment standards—meaning health and safety, and workplace safety insurance—as all other Ontario workers.

The Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act would extend protections for those who are currently live-in caregivers—many of them are foreign workers—to all temporary foreign workers under government work permits.

Also, all foreign workers would be protected from having their employer withhold or confiscate their passport. I have heard about that. In my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, we have a significant number of new Canadians, many of them foreign workers here. From time to time, employers will abuse their power and confiscate passports; it's a power and a control issue.

The other piece here: Foreign workers will be protected in terms of recruitment fees and other fees. I heard just recently about this particular concern, and I'm very pleased with this whole issue of protecting foreign workers and educating the community.

I have invited the minister, who will be coming to my riding very shortly to talk about foreign workers, because

this is what the concern here right now is: that many foreign workers do not know that they have rights, no different than any Ontarian who is currently working. We need to make sure that their rights are enforced and that they are being informed about their rights.

The other piece here is that the proposed legislation under schedule 1 of the act would also prohibit a recruiter or employer or person acting on their behalf, usually an agency, from intimidating or penalizing live-in care workers. Again, we hear about those stories, unfortunately, on the front page of newspaper. We need to do better, and I know everybody in this House knows that we have an obligation not just to everyday Ontarians who are currently living permanently in Ontario, but to those foreign workers who are here.

We also heard recently some of the concerns raised in reports that temporary foreign workers have been underpaid or overworked, denied their rights or not protected when they work over statutory holidays. They should be properly compensated.

So this is the right thing to do. When we talk about being compassionate as a government and an activist agenda, this is what I'm talking about. I know that every day we have foreign workers in our community.

The other piece about the temporary workers that we are concerned about is that we are building on our 2009 bill, which prohibits agencies from imposing barriers to prevent clients from hiring assigned employees directly, or charging a fee for things like writing a resumé or even taking a job. Again, in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt it has happened, such a thing as charging them to assist them because English is their second language. These are unacceptable practices.

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And then the other piece prohibiting clients of an agency from reprisal against any kind of sign that employees were asserting their employment standards rights, among other things—there will be retaliations when they speak out. That's unacceptable. Each one of us in Ontario should be free when speaking out, when you know that they're breaking the law. That foreign worker must be protected no differently than any other worker in Ontario, because that's a responsibility of all of us here in this Legislature.

The other piece is that the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act would also establish joint and several liability between the temporary help agency and the clients for failure to pay the wages. To give you an example, recently in my riding I heard of a case, very tragic. A worker has been working extensive hours at minimum wage. His employer has not been properly paying him—because he knows that he is a foreign worker—to the tune of almost \$10,000. You and I both know, sitting here, "Hm, do they really exist?" I know they exist. I am concerned that employer may potentially declare bankruptcy or do all kinds of interesting deviant behaviours from paying for this particular foreign worker, who has done the work and has not been properly paid.

The other part of the proposed legislation is better protecting the temps, ensuring the temp agencies that operate above board, which are competing and encouraging employers, are following the letter of the law. So that's a very good, important thing, Mr. Speaker.

In schedule 2 of the proposed legislation, it is specifically dealing with the Employment Standards Act. First of all, this particular section of the act would remove the \$10,000 cap on the recovery of wages through the Ministry of Labour. Currently, this cap means that if you are owed more than \$10,000, you must go to recovery. That money goes through the legal system, which is very costly. We need to fix that, because we know the most vulnerable workers will not see that money if we don't fix this piece.

This particular schedule amendment would also allow the workers more time to recover their wages by moving the statutory time limit from six or 12 months to two years. Again, you know vulnerable workers sometimes do not know what their rights are. We know that they may not speak out. Before they file the claims, they leave their jobs, because they're so afraid of reprisal. By amending the legislation, we'll provide additional protection of these workers.

The other piece of the proposed legislative changes would also tie the increase of minimum wage to inflation. I don't know about you, but during this past election, I consistently heard that we have a duty and responsibility to make sure, when we raised the minimum wage recently, that this minimum wage increase will not come back five years from now, 10 years from now to get another raise. Every day, hard-working Ontarians who are working for minimum wage will have some kind of increase to reflect inflation. Just to give you an example, my colleague who just retired as an MP in Ottawa—his pension is going to increase depending on inflation. Why shouldn't hard-working Ontarians get the same benefit? When they work hard, they should be respected. We all agree with this premise. But the fact of the matter here is that it has taken a long time for us to even pass the increase on the minimum wage recently. We need to ensure that especially vulnerable people, especially the young people—the pages very soon will be working—will not be stuck at \$11 an hour in 2025. This House has a responsibility to especially vulnerable workers.

The other piece is that the proposed legislation under schedule 2 will require the employers to provide workers with free employment standards posters in 23 languages. I cannot stress enough how important this requirement is. Coming from my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, there are multiple languages—definitely Chinese, Tamil. There is Hindi and Urdu and a variety. But the key piece is, there is now a new requirement that the Ministry of Labour, if the legislation is passed—that the employer must complete, and post these posters so that the workers know their rights and have the proper information. Oftentimes, the workplace is seen as just a drop-in when the reality is that there is an exchange of employment-employee relationship.



The other pieces in schedule 2 of the proposed legislation talk about how the Ministry of Labour will require the employer to complete a self-audit of their compliance to help the Ministry of Labour reach more workplaces.

Again, each one of us, as an MPP, is an employer, and I believe that all of us would have done some self-audit. It's very important that we do self-compliance. I know, as a former registered nurse, I did what was called a "self-audit" of our professional development. It is very important that every employer across the board do the same.

The other piece here is that the proposed legislation also gives the Ministry of Labour—cracking down and increasing fines for those who are repeat offenders. We're not targeting the employers who sometimes make a mistake, but those habitual, repeat offenders—it cannot be seen that just paying the fine is doing the business of the day. Their fine must be significantly increased so that there will be consequences to their actions.

The other piece here, in schedule 3 of the legislation, deals specifically with the Labour Relations Act. I know the member from Niagara talked about the issue about the unions etc. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to quote the proposed legislation in schedule 3: "The new section 127.3 of the act applies to the construction industry and establishes two-month open periods during which a trade union may apply to the board for certification as bargaining agent of any employees in a bargaining unit."

At the end of the day, this part of the schedule also strengthens the Labour Relations Act by returning to the pre-Harris policy of a two-month open period in construction. This will also reduce unnecessary workplace strife, and, furthermore, our trade workers, we need to ensure—we know we respect them—that they focus on building the roads and building the Ontario that we all are very proud of.

I want to spend the remaining part of my time, Mr. Speaker, focusing on two very important parts of the proposed legislation that are very dear to me as a registered nurse. Schedule 4, dealing with occupational health and safety: This is the section that I believe the minister, when he presented this particular bill to the House—listening to the member from London West, Mr. Speaker. Do you remember that conversation about co-op students, about trainees and unpaid learners?

The proposed legislation defines very specifically about protection, making sure that there will be coverage under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to co-op students who are not receiving pay, so that they will have the same rights as all Ontario workers—making sure that the youngest citizens who are currently in training are being protected under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Our rules are going to be strengthened, but no matter what your job title is, whether you're a co-op student, the president or CEO of the company, you are going to adhere to the legislation. If you perform work for somebody, you're entitled to the same employment standards, the same type of health and safety protections—even those who earn minimum wage.

There are also two narrow exemptions of this proposed legislation which apply to co-op students and other unpaid learners or trainees. For example, as a former nursing professor, I know that every day when I was teaching, I was bringing nursing students in long-term care, in nursing homes, in the hospital, in the community environment. These nursing students now will be protected under the proposed legislation. Every day across Ontario, from the community colleges to universities and career colleges, our young people are doing these kinds of on-the-job training. The proposed legislation will be protecting them, no differently than anybody who is currently working on a work site.

Especially right now, with the Ebola conversation we had this morning during question period, when I asked the Minister of Health about this particular issue, students—nursing students and medical students—on any kind of training may be exposed to potential viruses. I was involved during the SARS time in 2003, and I know that students everywhere who are training could be exposed to this kind of environment. This is a very important piece of proposed legislation. Even if you're paid, legally—unpaid, in the case of the co-op students or students who are in training—you will be protected under the same kind of rules as everyone else.

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The final section of the legislation is schedule 5, dealing with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. In the proposed legislation, it is very clearly defined—any time there is a challenge of legislation, it goes back to the definition. In the proposed legislation—I'm going to take a minute, Mr. Speaker, to talk about that—it actually explicitly spells out what is a temporary help agency:

"Temporary help agency" means an employer referred to in section 72 who primarily engages in the business of lending or hiring out the services of its workers to other employers on a temporary basis for a fee."

This is very important. If there is a challenge to the proposed act when the legislation has been passed by the House, they will challenge it because the legislation does not explicitly spell out and define the term "temporary help agency" or "temporary help agency worker." So in the proposed schedule 5 of the legislation, it spells it all out so that there will be no grey zone. It will be very black, very explicit, so that there will be no confusion whether you are a temporary help agency or not.

More importantly, the act, if passed, will provide protection to the most vulnerable. As I'm wrapping up my time, my 20 minutes of remarks, I cannot stress enough how important this proposed legislation is to protect every Ontarian, regardless of whether you are a permanent employee, a permanent Ontarian working here in Ontario, or one of those who are considered foreign workers—and, more importantly, our young people. I heard passionately from our colleague from London West when she presented her private member's bill last session; I know my colleagues opposite in the third party will know what I'm talking about. I agree with her proposed private member's bill.

I believe that the minister also heard you—and the member from London West will know what I'm talking about—because, at the end of the day, the proposed legislation is not just targeting those who are permanent Ontario workers, but that everybody who works in an environment, whether they are paid or unpaid, is being protected. This government has an agenda to ensure that every worker in Ontario is being protected. I believe that the minister, Minister Flynn, is very, very concerned about every worker in Ontario, because, at the end of the day, when one worker is injured or killed in the line of work, every Ontario family suffers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you very much.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I listened intently to the member from Scarborough and her address today. She referred many, many times to her career as a registered nurse, and I appreciate that because, boy, that's a profession that I have the greatest respect for, the work that they do for us, as well, making us healthy and our lives that much better, and the work they do in keeping patients, when they do need that, cared for in a very, very special way.

But today, of course, she's now the MPP, so she has morphed that career into a new career. I've always enjoyed working with her on committee and in other opportunities here in the House.

She went into some great details about the minutiae of the bill, and that's appreciated, because I think it's important that we know the details sometimes. And yet I still always fall back on the 64,000-foot level, because that's the one that the people understand, and that's the message that we have to get across.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** A hundred thousand jobs.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, right, Percy; thank you very much. The member from Windsor–Tecumseh is always so helpful. I've got to find out who those relatives of his are in my riding so I can get them on my campaign team the next time around. I'm sure they want to play integral roles in my re-election bid in 2018.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Great to see you in Killaloe.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, it would be great to see me anywhere, Jim.

But as I say, there are a lot of details in this bill, and that always presents us with that challenge, when you're looking at a piece of legislation: Do I support the bill? Do I support part A or B or C, or can I support it in its entirety? That's why I encourage the government to be a little more circumspect about this when they're putting these pieces of legislation together and not to wrap too much into a single bill, so that we have the opportunity to digest it on the merits of the bill alone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for her recognition of the work that I had been doing around work-integrated learning

with a private member's bill last session. I did want to point out, however, that the contents of that private member's bill are really in no way addressed with this legislation.

The member from Niagara Falls talked about the student in the Niagara region who tragically died just last month. Members of this House may recall that in April of this year another young man, Aaron Murray, a 21-year-old student at Loyalist College, was working on an unpaid practicum as a security guard and he also tragically died while doing this unpaid practicum.

My concern that is not reflected in Bill 18 is around the quality of the work opportunities provided to post-secondary students. This young man, Aaron Murray, was doing the work of a security guard. He was essentially displacing an employee who should have been paid. There was no real, substantive learning component in the placement he was doing in this unpaid practicum as a security guard. This was not a quality learning opportunity for this student. Yes, it's absolutely essential that there be health and safety protections for all young people, all persons doing work placements, whether they're paid or unpaid. But we need to do much more to ensure the quality of these work opportunities and to extend further protections under the Employment Standards Act to young people in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I'm pleased to add my voice to colleagues from across the House today about the legislation, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act.

Might I say, in parentheses, that I'm happy to note that I actually lived in the ridings of two members opposite, the member for Windsor–Tecumseh's, where I grew up, in Windsor, Ontario, and of course, the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's, having spent some time in Eganville, as the member opposite will know. I was blessed to live in Eganville in that part of the Ottawa Valley.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** The Opeongo trail—my husband was an OPP officer in Killaloe. The member opposite mentioned Killaloe.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I've been to Douglas, even.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** And Douglas is a beautiful community, as my colleague notes.

As the member from Windsor–Tecumseh knows, I spent some time in the Chrysler plant. My dad was an auto worker in Windsor. So I grew up with an ethos and an ethic of finding quality job opportunities and protection of workers. My dad was unionized. He worked in the Chrysler plant, and I later followed him, as a young person.

I want to add my voice to my colleague's from Scarborough–Agincourt, who has, as members in this House will know, an incredible empathy and understanding of protecting the vulnerability of her fellow citizens, having been a nurse. I think our nurses, and I'm sure all mem-



bers of this House would agree, are among our most compassionate citizens. The care and compassion that they have for the most vulnerable is absolutely compelling. I think the efforts of this legislation and the focus that the member from Scarborough—Agincourt brought to the protection of our vulnerable workers, the protection of students, the protection of foreign workers is not only laudable but timely.

I'm absolutely delighted to add my reflections to my colleagues opposite and to my colleagues on this side of the House on this important piece of legislation, in the hopes that we can have ongoing positive conversations, and some addendum and perhaps some amendments at the committee that will strengthen the legislation. It's fine just as it is, but we welcome those comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to pick up on a few things that my colleague from—I should have gotten this first—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Barry's Bay.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Barry's Bay, yes, exactly—Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke was talking about. One is the amount of different issues that are put into this bill. This is just the briefing paper that our caucus got on this bill. There's five pages.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** That's more than I got.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** So what it doesn't do is give us an opportunity to—because there's things in the bill that we certainly agree with. But because all these things are put into one bill, it's very difficult to debate and to vote against this bill because there's some things that we like about it, but there's some things that we think should be changed in this bill.

One has to do with the WSIB and the business of hiring somebody through a temporary agency—you work along with these people, and then all of a sudden, they find out that the temp agency isn't paying its employees or something, and you get nailed, maybe with their WSIB costs, which you weren't expecting. How is that other business supposed to charge a customer for that extra

cost which he or she thought was being paid by the temp agency? There's issues like that, I think, that have to be looked at.

Also, when we were going through this, my colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex pointed out that a lot of these stakeholders had not been consulted on this bill. This comes as a complete surprise to many of them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I will return to the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for her final two-minute response.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I want to thank the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and my colleagues from London West, Burlington and Perth—Wellington. I want, first and foremost, to thank each of you, especially those who talked about my colleagues working every day as nurses to serve this great province called Ontario, keeping each one of us healthy and safe in our environment. I know my colleagues who are watching tonight will recognize that piece.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is I want to thank everybody. The suggestions from each of you are very appropriate as we debate this proposed Bill 18, but more importantly, moving forward, we cannot belabour the conversation because some time in the near future, we're going to have to go to committee so we can have more conversation.

I do appreciate some of the comments made by my colleagues opposite. At the end of the day, this is what democracy is about. This is what this whole conversation is about. But we need to have strong legislation to protect the most vulnerable.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Just as a personal point of interest: Because we had more than five minutes remaining in the original debate, we had to continue with the questions and comments until all were heard.

Seeing now that it is after the allotted time of 6 o'clock, this Legislature is adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*

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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones



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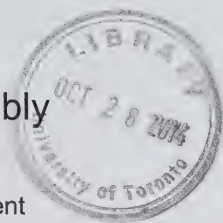
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of Ontario**

First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 22 October 2014**

**Mercredi 22 octobre 2014**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 22 October 2014

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 22 octobre 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Mrs. Sandals moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. Sandals.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Speaker, before I begin, I'd like to note that I will be sharing my time today with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

I'm very proud today to be—I'm sorry; I'm just trying to sort out if we have some confusion here. I'm very proud to have the opportunity to speak today in support of the government's plan to modernize Ontario's child care and early years system.

In December of last year, our government introduced Bill 143, the Child Care Modernization Act. Unfortunately, the bill's debate in this House was cut short, and it died on the order paper when the Legislative Assembly was dissolved for a general election. But I can state unequivocally that this government remains committed to that groundbreaking bill that will transform Ontario's child care and early years programs and services to ensure that children in this great province have the best possible start in life. That is why I'm proud to rise in this House today to discuss this important piece of legislation.

Bill 10, if passed, will modernize our child care and early years system, and replace the outdated legislation that currently governs child care in this province. It is really outdated. It was first tabled in the 1940s and hasn't been amended since the 1980s.

This new act will make our system more responsive to the needs of parents and children and better reflect the realities of our modern world. It will ensure Ontario's families have access to safe and high-quality care that gives children the head start they need for lifelong success. If passed, it will also strengthen the oversight in the child care sector.

Speaker, this proposed legislation is truly transformative and will change child care and early years programs and services in this province for the better. It will build on the improvements we have already made, and I'm proud to say that full-day kindergarten is now available to every four- and five-year-old attending publicly funded schools in Ontario.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Exactly. We need to celebrate the full introduction of full-day kindergarten.

That means that this year, the FDK program will benefit approximately 265,000 children province-wide. In addition, we have a new child care funding formula in place that is based on current demographic and population trends.

We also have an Ontario Early Years Policy Framework. This framework sets out a vision and strategic direction for early years programs and services—that is, for children from birth up to six years of age, in the earliest years of their lives.

Despite these improvements to the child care and early years system, these services are currently governed by a patchwork of rules and regulations which can create confusion for families. In fact, the legislation that currently regulates the child care sector, the Day Nurseries Act, hasn't fundamentally changed since the 1980s. But as we all know, the world around us has certainly changed. These rules and regulations are simply outdated, and we need to better meet the needs of children and families in our modern world. That's why the proposed Child Care Modernization Act is a top priority for our government.

I'm pleased to be in the House today to speak to my fellow members about the Child Care Modernization Act, which I introduced as Bill 10 during our summer session this year. Bill 10, if passed, will repeal and replace the outdated Day Nurseries Act, the legislation that currently governs child care in Ontario, as well as amend a number of other acts. It will amend the Education Act, the Early



Childhood Educators Act, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

If passed, the Child Care Modernization Act would support the government in working with partners to establish a system of integrated, responsive, high-quality and accessible child care and early years programs that support parents and families. It would improve safety and foster learning, development, health and well-being of children. It would provide a framework for the provision of child care and early years services and establish a licensing and compliance framework for child care.

It would set out powers related to the funding of child care and early years programs and services, and facilitate and support local planning and implementation of child care and early years services. It would provide access to information to support parents in making informed decisions about child care options, and improve our ability to evaluate the effectiveness of child care and early years programs.

Another important part of this proposed legislation would facilitate and support the local planning and implementation of child care and early years programs and services. It would reflect the leadership role that consolidated municipal service managers and district social services administration boards currently play as local service system managers in the delivery of child care and early years programs.

It would also give consolidated municipal service managers and district social services administration boards the flexibility to respond to local circumstances in a manner that best serves the needs of families in their communities. It would set out duties to co-operate with local partners to support the well-being of children. This allows local partners to best serve the needs of families in their own communities.

0910

In addition, Speaker, a key objective of Bill 10 is to improve oversight in the child care sector. This is because the safety of Ontario's children is of paramount importance. To strengthen oversight, our government would have a range of new enforcement tools to protect the province's children and safeguard their well-being. These new enforcement tools would apply to both licensed and unlicensed providers and include the authority to issue administrative penalties, which could be up to \$100,000 per infraction, and the authority to immediately stop a child care provider from operating in circumstances where children's safety is at risk. It would give us the ability to issue compliance orders and enforce rules in the unlicensed sector and increase the maximum penalties for successful prosecution of offences in the court system from \$2,000 up to a maximum of \$250,000. To put this in context, the only enforcement tool that we have right now under the existing Day Nurseries Act is to take a non-compliant operator to court, and even if we win in court, the maximum fine is \$2,000. This gives us a significant improvement in terms of our ability to enforce the law.

Additional measures to support the safety of children include the prevention of individuals from providing

child care if they have been previously convicted of certain crimes. This also applies to individuals who have been convicted of certain offences under this proposed act and individuals whose membership has been revoked from a regulatory body, such as the College of Early Childhood Educators, over professional misconduct. It would also require certain people who, in the course of their employment, have reasonable grounds to suspect an imminent threat to a child's health or safety when in care to actually report this to the Ministry of Education. Currently, there is no requirement for professionals who may be aware of a problematic situation to actually report it to our inspectors, so this is a new requirement in law.

Speaker, it goes without saying that child care plays a critical role for Ontario's families, communities and the health of our economy. This proposed legislation shows our government is committed to building on our success and safeguarding the well-being of our province's children. Bill 10 includes measures to help parents make informed decisions about child care options by ensuring that parents understand whether a provider is licensed or unlicensed and providing parents with information about whether a provider has contravened the act.

These measures would include prohibiting unlicensed providers from using such terms as "child care centre" or "licensed child care" or "licensed daycare." It would prohibit unlicensed providers from claiming to be licensed explicitly or by implication. It would require unlicensed providers to disclose their unlicensed status to parents and retain proof of such disclosures. It would require licensed providers to post a licence or any other required information or signage in a visible location, and it would prohibit copies from being made of those licences unless required by law. It would require people who are paid for child care services to provide a receipt for payment if requested by the parents.

It would require the Ministry of Education to publish information about contraventions of the proposed act or its regulations, including publishing compliance orders, protection orders, administrative penalties and convictions, and it would prevent any child care provider from stopping a parent from accessing their child or the child care premises, unless the provider believes the parent has no right to access the child or may be dangerous or disruptive. Parents want to know their children are in a safe, nurturing environment, and parents need to know that the government can intervene if their child is at risk.

In addition to expanding the government's powers of oversight, the proposed legislation would also increase access to licensed home-based care. This means additional spaces in home-based settings. Under the proposed act, the number of children permitted in licensed home-based care would be at least one child greater than in unlicensed settings. That means that the number would increase from five, which, as I say, is the current limit, to six in licensed home-based care. This would translate to additional child care spaces in licensed home-based settings. More specifically, this means that if all current licensed home child care providers took on one addi-

tional space, approximately 6,000 new child care spaces would be created. This is another example of how Bill 10 would help the families and children of Ontario.

In addition, we recognize the role that unlicensed child care providers play in offering child care options for families. Under the proposed legislation, licensed home-based providers and unlicensed providers would need to follow the same rules on age restrictions. In the case of unlicensed providers, they would still be allowed to care for a maximum of five children; however, unlicensed providers would have to follow the same rules as licensed providers and count their own children under the age of six toward the maximum number of children permitted in their care. This also means that unlicensed providers can care for no more than two children under the age of two. This restriction is consistent with research on brain development and safety provisions needed to protect young children.

The proposed legislation also prohibits a person from providing unlicensed child care at more than one location. I would also note that Bill 10 includes the regulatory authority to further reduce the number of children unlicensed providers can care for in the future, if it makes sense to do so.

All of these measures are intended as incentives for unlicensed providers to become part of the licensed sector. We want to encourage unlicensed caregivers to join a licensed home care agency, and we want to help increase access to licensed home-based options.

Speaker, this proposed legislation, if passed, would also help parents make informed decisions about their child's care by clarifying what programs require a licence and what programs are exempt. Certain types of care, such as care provided by relatives, in-home nannies and babysitters, would fall largely outside the scope of the proposed legislation. Camps that operate for no more than 13 weeks for children who are junior kindergarten age would be exempt. Private schools serving children who are junior kindergarten age and up, and other recreational programs that are primarily aimed at providing recreation or sports activities, or cultural or language activities—all those other programs for school-age and up children—would be excluded. They are not primarily daycare, and they would therefore not be required to meet the licensed child care provisions.

In addition, certain types of child care that meet specific criteria would not require a licence. This includes unlicensed child care, which we've already talked about a lot, and, subject to regulations, authorized recreation programs for children six years and under. We do recognize that there are all kinds of things like swimming classes or gymnastics classes or various forms of things for little toddlers that are primarily recreation, and there is no need for them to be treated as if they are child care. However, our goal is to place an emphasis on the standards and protections of the licensed system for children under four years of age, as they are the most vulnerable group, and allow some flexibility for older children, where parents can make informed choices about their child's care.

## 0920

In addition to clarifying when a licence is required, the proposed legislation also sets out criteria for individuals applying for a licence, to support high-quality and viable child care options. The grounds for refusing, not renewing, or revoking a licence would include:

- the applicant is not competent;
- past conduct indicates the applicant will not operate within the law;
- the accommodation does not comply with requirements;
- the applicant has made a false statement;
- there has been no change in circumstances where a licence was previously revoked or refused;
- advice from a service manager, First Nation or local authority indicates that the licence would authorize child care in an area inconsistent with the local service plan; or, finally,

—a failure to comply with a protection order and/or prescribed requirements, or a failure to pay an administrative penalty which has been previously proposed.

Any of these would be grounds for refusing, not renewing, or revoking a licence.

The proposed legislation also includes provisions related to licensing. These provisions would include:

- the ability for child care providers to appeal decisions to the Licence Appeal Tribunal;
- the authority to set out terms and conditions of a licence;

—the requirement to notify an applicant or licensee and parents that a licence has been refused or revoked. That is to say, if we refuse renewal or revoke a licence, we would want to let the parents who are currently in that situation know that the licence is being removed, so that the parents understand that the status of the setting has changed.

The provisions in the act also include the ability to issue a provisional licence so a provider can operate under the condition that violations are being addressed within a set period of time. What often happens during the renewal process for a licence is that an inspector will note that there is a small variation from the licensing requirements. In that case, we would simply issue a provisional licence while the operator comes into compliance with the rules.

We want providers to clearly understand when a child care licence is required, and we want it to be clear when a licence will be granted or renewed and when it can be refused or revoked.

Building on these licensing requirements, another way we can increase oversight in the child care sector is by empowering inspectors. If passed, this legislation would allow for the appointment of inspectors who are employees of the province. The legislation would set out the powers and duties of inspectors, including the authority to enter a location without a warrant in certain circumstances.

One of the issues that has been raised with the current Day Nurseries Act is that if there is a complaint received



and the Ministry of Education inspector goes to that site—typically, a home-based site—if the owner of the home won't let them in the door, there actually isn't anything that the inspector, under the Day Nurseries Act, can do about the fact that they're being refused entry.

Under the new legislation, if passed, inspectors would be able to enter without a warrant if the provider is operating under the authority of a licence, including home child care associated with a licensed home child care agency. That is to say that inspectors can automatically enter the premises when you're licensed or, in the case of unlicensed premises, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the proposed act or regulations are not being complied with, including unlicensed child care in an individual's home, as I've said.

As employees of the province, inspectors would also have other powers and duties. These powers and duties would include the powers to examine records, demand documents, and remove and/or copy records. That's often got to do with the records of how many children were on site, when, under what circumstances and for how long. The powers and duties would include using data storage equipment on the premises to take photos or video recordings and question people on matters relevant to the inspection. The inspector would be able to request criminal reference checks from a licensee or persons who have applied for a licence, their employees, a person who provides home care, and persons where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an individual is prohibited from providing child care. There would also be a requirement to provide a report to the child care provider.

So whether it is creating new enforcement tools, increasing access to licensed care, increasing oversight or clarifying when a licence is required, this proposed legislation is very necessary. It is necessary to modernize the child care and early years system in Ontario and it is necessary to ensure parents have access to a responsive, high-quality and accessible child care and early years system.

I should also mention Bill 10 contains some minor amendments that are largely technical in nature. These amendments do not diverge from the original scope or intent of the proposed legislation, but one amendment I would like to mention relates to the extension of the Ontario education number to post-secondary institutions. I should also note that this bill already—the Ontario education number is the ID number that is assigned to all elementary and secondary students in Ontario. The previous child care bill and this bill both include the extension of the use of the OEN, the Ontario education number, into licensed child care settings—that is, we would begin to issue the OEN when children first enter licensed child care, which means we can track them through child care on into elementary and secondary. What's new in this version, in Bill 10, is the ability to extend the use of the Ontario education number to post-secondary institutions.

This was previously part of Bill 151, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act, which died on the order paper in the last Parliament. What we have done is,

because we were already dealing with the extension of the OEN into the preschool set, we've also moved in amendments that extend the use of the OEN, the Ontario education number, to the post-secondary set so that we can now be able to track students as they graduate from high school and move on into post-secondary, either college, university or training settings.

This amendment would actually provide the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities with the authority to link a student's post-secondary data with their kindergarten to grade 12 data. This K to 12 data is already collected by the Ministry of Education, but the post-secondary sector doesn't have access, and vice versa; so this improves the coordination between ministries. It will enable us to follow a child on their journey through school. From birth to adulthood, we can evaluate a student's academic progress through various paths that they may choose to take and through various locations around the province. We'll get a more complete picture of how our education system is doing in terms of preparing our students for the future.

But this transformative legislation goes even further. It builds upon the existing requirements for schools to offer before- and after-school programs for four- and five-year-olds in full-day kindergarten, where there is sufficient demand from the community. If passed, this proposed bill would extend before- and after-school programs for children aged six to 12. To support this, in addition to repealing and replacing the outdated Day Nurseries Act, Bill 10 would also amend the Education Act.

The proposed amendment to the Education Act would place a duty on school boards to ensure that programs are offered for children six to 12 years old—this is before and after school—where there is sufficient parental demand. This would enable boards to offer developmentally responsive before- and after-school programs, either directly or through a third-party provider. It would build on the success of full-day kindergarten and it would help meet the needs of children as they grow and progress through school.

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In addition to amending the Education Act, this legislation would also amend the Early Childhood Educators Act. These proposed amendments are based on feedback we received last year as part of a five-year statutory review of the Early Childhood Educators Act, which happened to coincide with the development of the Child Care Modernization Act, so we rolled it all into one bill—the outcome of the review of the Early Childhood Educators Act.

The proposed amendments to the Early Childhood Educators Act include clarifying the requirements for registration as a member of the college of ECEs. This means mandatory membership for all qualified persons working within a defined scope of practice. It provides the college with the authority to accredit ECE programs in post-secondary institutions and other bodies, and to accredit ongoing education progress, strengthening information-sharing and reporting between the college of ECEs,

employers and the ministry to support enforcement and oversight. So these proposed changes to the ECE act would help the College of Early Childhood Educators protect the public interest, and the amendments would enhance the college's ability to support our common goals for child care and the early years system. These are the key areas of the proposed legislation.

Another essential part of this legislation is that it reflects valuable input from our stakeholders. In 2012 we received over 400 submissions during our consultation period from municipalities, child care providers, First Nations, child care advocates and other child care and early years partners, and, of course, from parents. We wanted to hear directly from stakeholders, and they also wanted to be heard. They are the caregivers, the families, the communities and the advocates that play an essential role in the care of Ontario's children. Speaker, we listened to our stakeholders. We continue to value their input, and we've heard what they were asking for. Without their feedback, this bill would be incomplete, and we thank them again for their valuable input.

Without a number of other programs and measures our government has already put in place, our plans for modernizing the child care and early years sector would also be incomplete. Therefore, it's worthwhile mentioning some important changes we have already undertaken to complement the proposed legislation. They are all part of a comprehensive package our government has put together to help give Ontario's children a great head start and safeguard their well-being.

In line with our goals to protect children, I would like to make everyone aware of one particular commitment that we made last year which we have honoured. We pledged to create a searchable registry of verified complaints about unlicensed child care providers. In August, the Ministry of Education launched this online tool, and it is available to anyone through our ministry's website. It provides people with confirmed information about unlicensed providers who have violated the current Day Nurseries Act. This searchable registry has also been paired with a toll-free telephone number. The telephone number allows people to report alleged complaints regarding unlicensed providers and inquire about verified complaints against unlicensed providers which have been noted on the website.

As a supplement to this registry, we are also establishing a dedicated enforcement unit to follow up on complaints and information relating to unlicensed child care providers.

We want to keep Ontario's children safe and hold violators accountable. The registry, toll-free number and our new dedicated enforcement unit are all ways we're improving oversight of the child care and early years systems, and Bill 10 will help us build on this and go even further.

Speaker, I've outlined why we need this legislation, what it will do and how it will help improve child care and early years services in our great province. That's why I encourage all members here today, regardless of party,

to support the Child Care Modernization Act. Ontario's children and families cannot wait any longer.

The Child Care Modernization Act is transformative, and it will build on the proven success of our education, child care and early years systems. It will position Ontario as a future leader in these essential areas, and it will eliminate the problems caused by the current patchwork of rules and regulations.

It's critical that we pass this bill quickly, so I look forward to the support of all members in this House on this very important piece of legislation, and I look forward to continuing the great work we have already done to modernize child care and early years services in Ontario. By passing this important bill, we can deliver on a promise that will benefit everyone in the province and contribute to our future prosperity. Without question, we need a child care and early years system that gives children the best possible start in life, and the Child Care Modernization Act will help us to do that.

Thank you, Speaker, and I will now turn things over to my parliamentary assistant.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Glengary–Prescott–Russell.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's an honour for me to rise today in the House, and I'm very pleased to be able to speak to Bill 10, which is the Child Care Modernization Act. I'd like to start off by saying that many parents across this province, and their children, will benefit from this very transformative piece of legislation. But it's also important to me because my children—Chloe, who is 27, and Calvin, who is 22—have both provided me with grandchildren. Although I look young, I do have three grandchildren who I'm very, very proud of.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I'm told that all the time.

As I said, my daughter, Chloe, has two children: Alexi and Maeve. Alexi is six years old now, and he has benefited from full-day kindergarten as well as before- and after-school programs. I think that this is an incredible initiative on behalf of our government. I look forward, as well, as Maeve, who is two and a half, will be entering full-day kindergarten within the next year and a half to two years. As well, Mason, who is my son Calvin's son, is two years old, too. My grandchildren are very special to me. I wish I had more time to spend with them, Speaker, but I'm very proud to be here to speak to this bill and make sure that it passes through the House very quickly.

This morning, you had the opportunity to listen to the minister, who spoke a great deal about the bill, and I'm very pleased to continue that discussion. If passed, Bill 10 will modernize our child care and early years system. It will replace the outdated legislation that currently governs child care in this province. This proposed legislation, as I said earlier, is transformative. By changing child care and early years programs and services in this province, it will change them for the better. It's part of our multi-year strategy for modernizing child care and early years systems across the province.



Another part of this strategy has been our Ontario Early Years Policy Framework. This has guided and is guiding our collective approach to early years programs and services for children and families. Most recently we released *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. This document was inspired by a shared desire to build a common approach to guide pedagogy and child development. This resource will help guide learning and development in child care and early years settings. It will help ensure coherence across those early years settings, and it will also help to strengthen the quality of our early years programs and services all across Ontario.

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We know from extensive research that experiences in a child's earliest years have an extraordinary and long-lasting impact on their learning, their development and their overall well-being. That is why, Speaker, we have an ambitious vision for early years programs and services for children from birth up to six years of age.

Perhaps the boldest and most recent example of our great progress is the province-wide rollout of full-day kindergarten. This was a major milestone for education in this great province. Full-day kindergarten was five years in the making, and we are tremendously proud of this achievement.

In the fall of 2009, the then education minister and now Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, announced plans for this innovative program. There was to be an entire day of early learning that would make Ontario a leader in North America. I can proudly say that this ground-breaking program is now available to every four- and five-year-old in Ontario's publicly funded schools. This represents the biggest transformation our education system has seen in a generation, and with more than \$1.5 billion in capital funding to date, it is also the single most significant investment we've made in education in an entire generation.

The encouraging news is that we know it is already paying dividends. A recent study showed that students who attend the two-year full-day kindergarten program are better prepared for grade 1. It also showed that their personal and social development was accelerated. The evidence is already clear: Full-day kindergarten is giving our children a great head start in life, and it is giving them the confidence and trust to enter and succeed in school. Without a doubt, full-day kindergarten represents the next step on a continuum of learning for Ontario's children. But as we have said, we need to set our sights even higher and even further ahead to maximize a child's potential in their earliest years.

As both the minister and I have outlined, ambitious plans for the modernization of the child care and early years system are already in motion, and they are an essential part of our broader plan for the education system as a whole. This plan is laid out in our renewed vision for education, *Achieving Excellence*.

Last fall we sought advice from experts, thought leaders, educators, parents, students and researchers, as well

as business and the not-for-profit sector. These consultations proved invaluable as we calibrated our long-term aspirations and goals for education in Ontario for children and students from birth to adulthood.

Thus far, our renewed vision for education has received an overwhelmingly positive response, and our top priority is to work with our education partners to realize the vision's four key goals: achieving excellence, ensuring equity, promoting well-being and enhancing public confidence. These goals were based on feedback from our partners across the province, including students, parents, business, community organizations and much more. The vision emphasizes working with non-traditional partners like religious groups and community health agencies, which often have existing resources to help deliver services and learning programs. We will also work with the business sector as well as research and innovation. The relationships we've established through the consultation process will be invaluable. Of course, we've already made progress in a number of key areas, and we are already committed to making our vision a reality.

As I mentioned earlier, this plan for achieving excellence closely mirrors our parallel goals for transforming the child care and early years sector. Our renewed vision for education and our vision for early learning are born from the same guiding principle: to give children the best possible start and to help them reach their full potential so they can achieve lifelong success. This is good public policy for Ontario's children, and it is good for Ontario's future prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at Ontario's child care and early years system, we can honestly say it has served us well. But the fact remains that it hasn't fundamentally changed since the 1980s, and yet our world has changed dramatically over the last 30 years. I can hardly remember what I was doing when I was 21 years old, 30 years ago.

That is why we need the new Child Care Modernization Act, and that is why we need this important piece of legislation to pass quickly. It will modernize and build a high-quality system that is seamless and more responsive to parents' needs.

This has been our government's commitment all along. In the speech from the throne, we committed to a more comprehensive and integrated child care and early years system. In our 2011 and 2014 election platforms, we pledged to modernize Ontario's child care system, as well as ensuring that schools had before- and after-school programs for children aged six to 12 once full-day kindergarten was fully implemented.

In the summer of 2012, we held public consultations on our proposed vision through the release of the discussion paper *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario*. In January 2013, we released our Ontario Early Years Policy Framework.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is recognized around the world for our education system. The proposed Child Care Modernization Act is another example of how far we've come. But we are also on the leading edge of ground-

breaking change. While our child care and early years system has served us well for a long time, it is governed by a mix of rules and regulations, and it no longer reflects the realities of our modern world.

We have clearly outlined why we need this legislation. We have explained not only what it will do, but also how it will improve the lives of children right across this great province.

We are encouraging all members of this House to support the Child Care Modernization Act because Ontario's children and families cannot wait any longer. They need a system that is responsive to their needs. They need a system that better reflects the realities of today. They need us to strengthen oversight in the child care sector, and they need better access to safe, modern care that gives children what they need most.

The Child Care Modernization Act is transformative, and it is a logical and necessary step for our education, child care and early years system. With this bill, Ontario will be a leader in these essential areas, and we will solve the problems caused by the current patchwork of rules and regulations governing the sector. That's why it's imperative that we pass this bill as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking to all members of this House for their unwavering support on this important piece of legislation. We look forward to building on our great work to modernize child care and early years services in Ontario. By passing Bill 10, everyone in this House will deliver on a promise that benefits everyone in this province and will contribute to our future prosperity. That is why, in the spirit of true partnership and bipartisan goodwill, I urge all MPPs to stand up and do what is best for our children.

Ontario needs a child care and early years system that gives children the best possible start in life and puts each and every child on a firm path to lifelong success. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the Child Care Modernization Act will help us do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** It was very interesting to listen to the speeches on Bill 10 from the minister and the parliamentary assistant. I'm going to have a chance to do the one-hour leadoff myself very shortly, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus.

I was given a briefing by the Ministry of Education, back in July, on Bill 10. Of course, they made it sound like it was the most perfect bill that was ever created in the history of Ontario. Now I hear the minister and the parliamentary assistant both saying that this bill should be passed very quickly. I can't agree at all with that. If this was important to the government over the last 12 years, it would have been passed eight or 10 years ago. Certainly, if it was important, it would have been passed before at least the last election.

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I'm hearing—and I'm hearing from people across the province, representing thousands of people—about all kinds of problems with the bill. My concern right now is

that I want those people to have proper consultations. I won't be happy—and I've already asked the House leaders, Mr. Speaker. I want an opportunity for this bill to travel in the winter recess, plain and simple. There are a lot of people who know nothing about this bill. The people who are finding out about it know that there will be a major impact financially and we will lose child care spaces in the province of Ontario. It's that simple.

So I'd ask the minister right now to bear with us and make sure that we have good debate on this bill in the House, and that means all members will have an opportunity, but more importantly, that we'll have an all-party bill travel in the winter recess. When we're back here by Family Day, which is only a six- or seven-week delay, I think then we can have a better understanding of what the people of Ontario want and what the impacts of this bill will be, and then we will be making proper amendments based on that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It was a pleasure to listen to the minister and her parliamentary assistant today talk about this bill. As you're well aware, Speaker, we have raised questions in the House about the need for oversight in the child care sector, about the responsibility of all legislators to be looking out for the interests and safety of children and of their families. For us, the idea that there would be a strengthened regulatory framework, an increase in licensed care—these are very positive things.

You may well be aware of situations in your own riding. I certainly am in mine, where I have dealt with parents who are extraordinarily anxious about the day-care or child care opportunities and situations they have to face. I've had parents say to me, "My child is in unlicensed, unsupervised care. I don't have any choice. If I'm going to work, that's all that's available." But I want a sense that that process is overseen. I've also talked to parents whose children were in unlicensed care and who came across some very serious problems with the treatment of their child and made it very clear to me that in their minds, a lack of government oversight was a critical failing in this province.

Speaker, this bill has got to be examined very closely in committee. There are issues that come out in terms of the ratio of caregivers or early childhood educators to children. There is certainly concern in the child care community about the regulations that came forward changing those ratios within the last 12 months. Speaker, when we go into committee on this bill, and I believe it will go to committee one way or the other, I think we need to look at the broader question of how we look after our children and how we ensure that parents have proper care for them during the day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Good morning, Speaker. As an educator, I believe that this bill is imperative. It's very important that when the people from my area leave in the morning, perhaps to come to Toronto or to commute



somewhere else, they know when they get in their cars that their young ones are going to be well looked after. Who possibly could object to their child care providers being licensed?

In my school, we are fortunate enough to have the Y daycare right in the building. There is always a waiting list, particularly for the little ones, who right now at this time of the year may be three and three quarter years old, and right up to 12 years. It's wonderful. The parents feel very confident that their children will be well looked after. I think this is important for everyone in the province.

The proposed legislation builds on steps that the province has taken to improve the oversight of child care. I know I've watched the news many times when there have been horrific reports about incidents in unlicensed daycare, and we want that to stop. We want the creation of a dedicated enforcement team to investigate complaints against unlicensed providers, and the development of an online, searchable database on validated complaints. I think this is important to everyone, particularly to the little ones in our care.

I thank you very much, and I hope that you will support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm pleased to stand to address and comment on Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I fully agree with my PC colleague from Simcoe North with regard to how imperative it is for this particular bill to be examined thoroughly, to go to committee and then be sent across the province and garner input, because as I look at this bill it seems to be the flavour of the day for this government to be incorporating many, many different bills into one bill. A colleague of mine, yesterday, was talking about how there may be aspects of a bill that we agree with but other aspects of a bill that we want to challenge. We need to look at and be very careful in how we go about this because, in fact, when we look at this particular bill, it's incorporating probably close to 13 different acts. I've never seen a bill so thick in my stay here at the Ontario Legislature. I'm concerned about that because some things will fall through the cracks. We have to carefully examine just how important it is for us as legislators to ensure that all stakeholders are looked after in this particular aspect.

I look at this and I'm concerned about the fact that, yes, there are some unlicensed daycare centres out there, but in fact this bill is probably going to affect close to 70,000 child care providers in the province and roughly 350,000 people in Ontario. That's a lot of people. My concern is with these child care providers, these daycare centres: What's going to happen to them? They're going to shut them down. They're trying to talk about how important it is for employment, to increase employment and get people back to work, and in fact, with this bill, it's actually shutting down daycare centres and forcing people to close the doors and be out of work. I have a very serious concern. So let's get this thing into committee and

let's get it in front of stakeholders throughout the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I recognize, again, the Minister of Education to respond.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I very much appreciate the comments of the member for Toronto–Danforth, who has recognized the urgency of improving our oversight of the unlicensed home child care sector. We really have very limited authority to intervene in what can be, in some cases—fortunately, relatively few, but in some cases—very dangerous settings. I want to thank the member for Toronto–Danforth for recognizing that this bill dramatically increases our ability to have oversight of the unlicensed home care sector and ensure that where there are dangerous situations, we actually have the ability to impose administrative penalties or, frankly, shut it down without having to go to court. This is the point: We can totally change the scheme so that we can solve the problem without having to rely on the courts.

I want to thank my colleague from Barrie, who talked about the increase in before- and after-care. We've actually increased the number of licensed child care spaces in Ontario by 130,000 over the last decade. We want to continue that trend of increasing the number of licensed spaces, which are the safe, reliable spaces.

I must say that I'm very distressed by the reaction of the members from the official opposition—the member for Simcoe North and the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex. What they are proposing is that we delay this bill. The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex referred to the bill as “thick.” I would rather refer to it as “comprehensive.” We have gathered together all the strands that have to do with child care legislation and rolled them into one comprehensive bill.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to be able to rise again and do the beginning of our leadoff on the Child Care Modernization Act. Let me say right off the bat that our party is not opposed to licensing. We're certainly not opposed to oversight, and the safety of our children is paramount. Most of us have children and/or grandchildren, and they are probably the most precious things in our lives. Having those children, our children and grandchildren, attend daycare of any kind, we want it to be the very best.

There's one thing I want to point out, though. It's nice to have these comprehensive omnibus kinds of bills that cover everything, but really, in the end, what's important is that most parents, by far the vast majority of parents, know what's best for their own children. They know what's best for their children and the kind of daycare they leave them at or the kind of school they attend and the kinds of teachers they have. I know literally thousands and thousands of my constituents, and I would trust their judgment against the judgment of some provincial legislation. There are some cases where we add all these

regulations and we add a lot more legislation; however, in the end, it's really the parents who know best, by far the vast majority, because their children are the most precious things in their lives.

With that being said, I do want to thank the ministry, because they did offer me, and I took them up on the fact that we could do the briefing. They were very polite and nice, and they went through all of the different acts that were mentioned here, and I appreciate that, and I have to say that I really appreciate the fact that I'm the critic in education now. It was not a job that I thought a lot of people would want, but in our caucus, having the continuum between the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education, I've just found it to be absolutely phenomenal.

I've been able to work already since the middle of June—well, since about June 16 or 18 when I was told I had the job. I can tell you that I have met with literally hundreds and hundreds of stakeholders in all the different areas of the ministry, from the child care modernizations for the toddlers, people representing the toddlers, right through to the people who do their PhDs at our largest and most prestigious universities right here in Ontario.

I find this whole area fascinating. I'm enjoying doing it. It's a huge learning curve for me. This is the only bill that we've got before the House right now that we're actually debating, and I want to make sure, as the critic for education, that I get to voice the concerns of the people who are opposed to the bill, because we are opposition. That's our job. When constituents across Ontario come to us with opposing views to what the government is saying in the bill, our job is to make sure those concerns are heard.

That's why in my two-minute hit—as we call them—to the minister's speech, I mentioned, “Wow, a lot of people know nothing about this bill, absolutely nothing,” and it will have a major, major impact on, in particular, the independent child care providers here in Ontario, many, many of whom do a fantastic job looking after the children right here in our province. I want to make sure that they are treated fairly, and if it means more licensing, if it means more oversight, they are there for us.

This is not just about agencies and big brothers; this is about a mom with a couple of kids staying at home and looking after two of her neighbours' children. We want to make sure that they are all treated fairly. I heard both the minister and the parliamentary assistant say, “Oh, this has got to be passed quickly.” Well, come on. These bills have been around for, as someone said, 40 or 50 years in some cases. Surely this is not an urgent matter to pass before this House recesses at Christmastime. Surely we can let the people in Sudbury or the people in Kitchener or the people in Ottawa know what's happening so they can have a chance to come down and actually voice their concerns and listen to the committee.

When we come back here on February 17, we will pass and do the amendments to the bill, or the clause-by-clause. Then we can go into third reading, and the minister can probably have her bill passed by the 1st of March

or the middle of March at the latest. I don't think it's too much to ask, for the people of Ontario and the 350,000 children who are in daycare, that they can have a few more weeks to make sure that their parents, their grandparents, their daycare providers get a chance to speak to this.

I will be completely disappointed if they try to push this thing through before Christmas. That will be a huge area of concern for me, because I can tell you that's not what I thought the minister would be about. I think we deserve better than that on her first bill back in this session.

Mr. Speaker, could I ask how long I will be able to talk this morning?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We sit till 10:15, so another 10 minutes or so.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Thank you. I've got pages of stuff to read.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** You've got more time the next time.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yes, but I wanted to do it while you're in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I have all kinds of letters that have come forward to me, and I can read some of them. I'd like to give you an example of what I'm already hearing. Here's a case from a lady who said:

“Dear Mr. Dunlop,

“I would like to share with you the ways in which Bill 10 will affect me if passed.

“I am a certified elementary school teacher with 10 years professional experience working in the UK and here in Canada. I hold a BA and master's in education and have just had my first child.

“I decided to stay home and care for him myself for a few reasons. The cost of daycare is prohibitive. As teaching work is very difficult to come by in Ottawa I am reduced to supply work (if you can get on the list), working in a private school (very low paying) or working in a daycare centre (even lower paying). After paying for my son to attend daycare, I would be making the equivalent of \$5 per hour. It seems ridiculous that after eight years of university this is what I am worth.

“Therefore starting a home-based daycare business seemed logical to me. I offer an exceptional service, I am very well qualified, police checked, CPR trained and also have professional nanny training and experience from before my teaching career. I currently care for two babies plus my own son and a 5-year-old boy. The parents in my daycare are very happy with the service I provide and are very worried about any changes Bill 10 may cause.

“I have calls and emails weekly from parents trying to place infants. What I don't have is much interest in placing older children. If Bill 10 is passed and I and all the other daycare providers have to ask a parent of a baby to leave, where are all these babies going to go? If I can't make a living not only will the children I care for require a space but so will my son, so that I can work full-time. Bill 10 threatens to destroy my income and negatively impact my current clients. It won't improve safety as par-



ents will be forced to send their children to unscrupulous providers who don't follow the rules anyway.

"Please put a stop to this,

"Sincerely," a young lady from the Ottawa area.

I've got a number of them, and I'll read others as examples, as we go through the one-hour debate.

I've been dealing more recently with the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario. They're based out of Ottawa. They're growing rapidly in municipalities across the province, in opposition to Bill 10. It's one of the reasons I wanted to make sure that these people did have a chance to speak, other than by emails to me—to actually be able to go to a committee hearing in Kitchener or London or wherever it may be and have an opportunity to speak to their concerns on this bill.

This is a bill that is very important, as the minister has said, as the parliamentary assistant has said, and I think it's important that we get it right. I think it was the member from Chatham who said that it's a very thick bill. I don't care about that, as long as the bill makes a lot of sense. I want to make sure that it's sensible for the young people in our province and for those we treasure the most: our children and grandchildren.

I want to talk a little bit about the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario. It was founded to voice the grave concerns that thousands of parents and independent child care providers across Ontario have about Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act; specifically, the proposed reductions for the number and ages of children that independent child care providers can care for.

#### 1010

I'm going to call them CICPO. "While CICPO is in full support of improving child care in Ontario, there are two major issues with this bill that must be brought to the attention of Ontario families. The fact is that, should it pass, Ontario families will face a child care crisis of enormous proportions. Right now only 22% of Ontario's children are in licensed care, while family members and independent child care providers care for the remaining 78%. In real numbers, approximately 350,000 children are cared for by independent child care providers in Ontario. CICPO conservatively estimates that 140,000 of the 350,000 current spaces will be lost due to forced reduction of spaces and daycare closures. In fact, some spaces are already lost. We have reports that some providers have already terminated their clients and closed their doors, seeking employment elsewhere in anticipation of the bill passing. The remaining 210,000 spaces will come at a premium, as those parents whose providers work within the proposed new limits will have to face a fee hike of as much as 40%. Promises by the education minister of an additional 6,000 licensed spots are not only theoretical but will do nothing to stem the tide of this crisis. Furthermore, decreasing accessibility will only contribute to an underground market. Care will be in such high demand that parents will be more likely to accept substandard care arrangements."

Mr. Speaker, I've got a real problem with that particular part of it, because we don't want to limit the number of people we have now and then have an even further decline in the number of people who are actually providing that service.

"Secondly, this bill does not address individual licensing of home daycare providers. ICPs are not unlicensed by choice. No individual home care provider can obtain a licence in Ontario, as the government only provides licensing to agencies and centres. Those providers affiliated within an agency are working within their agency's licence, not their own. However, instituting a registry or licensing of all home daycare providers would ensure that all providers have current CPR and first aid and police background checks." I think that's a very important amendment that has to be made to this particular bill. "Every provider would be open to inspection by the Ministry of Education to ensure that they are in compliance with the law and health and safety regulations. Licensing would allow for 100% government oversight rather than relying on the public to report noncompliance."

And here is one other very significant benefit: "ICPs would be able to provide care for the thousands of children currently on subsidized wait lists. As of December 2013, there were almost 17,000 children on the subsidy wait list in Toronto alone. Clearly, the licensed sector does not have the capacity to meet the needs of Ontario families as we speak. Unfortunately too few families and providers are aware of this bill and its repercussions." Again, that's why I want it to go to committee.

"Education Minister Sandals states that the bill will strengthen the safety and quality of child care options for families. With no data to substantiate her argument, the minister has repeatedly alleged that ICP care is unsafe across the board. While CICPO has confirmed the ministry is undertaking no analysis regarding the safety of ICP care, our coalition has. Using a cohort of zero to four years of age, CICPO has gathered information from the Ontario Coroner's Office reports of deaths of children in the care of ICPs and population reports from Stats Canada over the period of 2009 to 2013.

"With the above data, CICPO found that the five-year mortality rate to children in the care of an ICP operating within the current regulations is 0.000017%. As Minister Sandals will not provide equivalent data for children in licensed care in terms of either deaths, injuries or complaints, we are unable to make a comparative analysis to licensed care. However, we can calculate that the overall mortality rate of children in Ontario over the period is 50 times greater than that of ICP care.

"Thus, despite the six tragic deaths that have occurred in the last five years, ICP care provides a safer environment for our children than that experienced by other children in general. These facts and calculations do not make the six deaths that took place over the last five years any less tragic, yet the fact that only one of those deaths was classified as accidental and occurred with an ICP in compliance with the current regulations clearly

indicates that the real issue is not the existing regulations but the lack of oversight that prevents providers from working outside the law. Although Minister Sandals promises this bill will provide the oversight necessary to ensure ICPs caring for more children than the law allows, the promise is an empty one. One cannot shut down what one cannot find.

"As long as this government refuses to facilitate a registry or licensing system for individual daycare providers, there will never be effective oversight. Minister Sandals's encouragement of ICPs joining licensed agencies to prevent this crisis is disobliging at best, as the fees charged by the agencies would result in ICPs absorbing an average loss of 20%.

"To briefly recap, should Bill 10 pass with the proposal to amend the number and age ratios of children that ICPs can care for, we expect the following: approximately 140,000"—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Am I getting near my end? Okay, just give me one second.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, I'll pick up later on, if it's all right with you. I've got a lot to discuss. Whenever we return to this bill, I'll be more than happy to continue my comments.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 10:15, the House stands in recess until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1037.*

## SHOOTINGS IN OTTAWA

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Premier on a point of order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, everyone. In light of what is happening in Ottawa at this moment I know that there is fear and uncertainty about what is happening. I want to just say that there were some suggestions that perhaps we should suspend the proceedings of today and suspend question period.

Our belief—and I have spoken with the leaders of the opposition parties—is that people who are using violence to undermine democracy want us to be silenced, and we refuse to be silenced. We will not be silenced.

Having said that, we all have to be very careful. We have to be vigilant. The authorities are very aware of the situation. Our Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has been in contact with the authorities. I have asked him to give the Legislature an update; then he will leave the House and he will continue to work with the authorities. But we will carry on with the business of this House and the business of our democratic society.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Thank you, Premier.

First of all, from all the members of this House, our thoughts and prayers are with the victims in Ottawa. It is

a developing scene. I just wanted to extend our thoughts and prayers for the families of the victims and all those who are involved right now with the developing situation in Ottawa.

The most important priority for our government is the safety and security of all Ontarians, and we obviously are very concerned by the situation at Parliament Hill in Ottawa. I am reassured by the quick response by the police and security in Ottawa. We will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

I am confident that we have the appropriate security measures in place at the Legislature to ensure safety as well. I understand that the Sergeant-at-Arms is aware of the situation and monitoring it closely.

We have amazing police services in this province, and I have full confidence in their ability and that of all of our first responders to keep Ontarians safe. The OPP and the local police services have a strong, coordinated, effective and timely response plan in place, no matter where an incident might occur in the province. The OPP is part of a national counterterrorism security force that also includes local police services, the RCMP and other federal agencies. The OPP is continuously working with its law enforcement partners to identify and assess threats to public safety, including any terrorist threats. From my discussions with the OPP, I am confident that the response to any incident involving terrorist activity would be well coordinated between provincial, federal and municipal authorities. I want to assure all Ontarians that our police, paramedics and firefighters train and prepare for dangerous situations of all scales.

We also encourage all Ontarians to remain vigilant: If they see or suspect any suspicious activity, please contact the local police service so that that police can act accordingly.

Thank you very much, Speaker, and I will beg your leave from question period today to monitor further, on behalf of the government, the situation that's developing in Ottawa.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On the same point of order? The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I just want to thank the Premier and the minister for their words and to ask for unanimous consent to have a moment of silence and prayer for the soldier who was shot guarding our National War Memorial, of all things.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of the third party first, and then we'll come back to your unanimous consent.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On behalf of New Democrats, I also want to send out our condolences to the people who were injured today in Ottawa. I'm sure we'll be getting more information throughout the day.

I also want to thank the Premier and the leader of the official opposition, the interim leader, for the very thoughtful way that we dealt with this crisis this morning. It really showed the best of what we can do in this place when issues of this import come before us. I look forward to us carrying on, in the way that we need to, the business



of the Legislature and the business of the people of Ontario, all the while knowing that there are people who are in a crisis situation in Ottawa, knowing that there are very well skilled and trained people from the peace-keeping forces who are going to be helping with the situation, to resolve it and keep people safe. With that, Speaker, I thank you for the news.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Now I would like to revert to the unanimous consent for the House to observe a moment of silence for the soldier who was victimized.

Do we agree? Agreed.

Could I ask everyone to rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to thank the leader of the third party, her Majesty's loyal opposition leader, the Premier and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for the co-operative manner in which we dealt with this issue directly. But I also would like to reinforce that I've been briefed and that our staff have been absolutely bang on and deserve our thanks one more time for how they treat our people here in this place. So, Sergeant-at-Arms, I thank you for your work.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm sure that's extended to all of our security and to the rest of the staff here at the Legislature. They do a fabulous job on a day-to-day basis, and I thank them for their response.

It is now time for introduction of guests.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I welcome Leo Steffler this morning to Queen's Park from my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, the lovely little town of St. Agatha. Leo is also the president of the Ontario Concrete Pipe Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'd like to introduce the Ontario branch Co-op Housing Federation guests who are here today: Diane Miles, Judy Shaw and Brian Eng. I want to encourage members to attend their reception between 5 and 7 in room 228.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm very pleased to introduce some special guest from the post-secondary sector: Dr. Brian Stevenson, president of Lakehead University. He's joined by Dr. MaryLynn West-Moynes, the president of Georgian College. They are accompanied by Richard Longtin from Lakehead University and Lisa Banks from Georgian College. Let's welcome them.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize everyone who is here for the Co-operative Housing Federation day, including Keith Moyer, Michael Moreau and Aaron Denhartog. I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon. I encourage all members to join them at their event this evening in rooms 228 and 230.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I rise to welcome members of the Police Association of Ontario, many of whom are

here in our building today. It's a lobby day, as many of us know. I think it's an important time to acknowledge the work that police officers do across our province, and the importance of that work, particularly considering what's happening this morning in Ottawa.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** This morning, I'm pleased to welcome representatives from the Ontario Long Term Care Association to Queen's Park. They're up there; I see some of them. OLTCa is Canada's largest long-term-care association and represents the full spectrum of charitable, not-for-profit, private and municipal long-term-care operators. I also ask everybody to join the OLTCa's lunch reception later today.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I have a number of guests here today—my friends Howard and Belle Kizell from North Bay; I have my old schoolmate Jim McParland and his daughter, Charlotte McParland.

From the North Bay Police Association, in the building we have today Carol Wolfe, Denis Levasseur, Ken Rice, Michael Hunter and Mike Tarini.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's my pleasure to welcome to the Legislature today in the Speaker's gallery my good friend Kevin McShan and his father, Keith McShan. We held a press conference this morning in the media gallery to address the important issue of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the province of Ontario. I want to welcome Kevin and introduce him to the House.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have four guests from the London Police Association: Rick Robson, Ozzie Nethersole, Chris Ross and Jerry Daniel. Welcome and thank you for being here today.

I would like to welcome Hannah Ferguson, who will be joining us a little bit later—she is the niece of my long-suffering executive assistant, Lisa Regan—and the grade 5 class from Saint Andrew Catholic School in the great riding of Halton.

1050

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'm pleased to introduce a family from Niagara-on-the-Lake today: Patricia Couroux, William Couroux, James Couroux and with their grandmother, Aurel James, right here.

Also, welcome to Abdiel Hernandez from Niagara Falls.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to rise and welcome today two members of the Thunder Bay Police Association: Greg Stephenson and Jim Glena. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'd like to welcome today representatives from the Jiangsu Provincial People's Congress of China. They are here today to learn a little bit more about the Ontario Legislature. They are Tang Jian, Wang Lin, Yu Wei, Kong Yun, Li Xiangyang and Zhu Zhengyu. Welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's called stealing the Speaker's thunder.

Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Speaker, there are a lot of receptions going on today. The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada is here, as we know, and I would like to introduce three who have not yet been introduced:

Nicole Waldron, Harvey Cooper and Judith Collins were here. The reception is in room 228/230 this evening. Please join us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've assigned a new ministry. It's the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. My apologies.

The member from Windsor—Essex.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I would like to introduce and welcome to the Legislature Jason DeJong, Ed Parent, Paul Bridgeman, Pete Mombourquette and Sue Garrett-Bural of the Windsor Police Association, who are here today with their colleagues from across Ontario.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce Fraser Howell, the proud father of Colston Howell, who is one of our pages and who led the page procession today. They were joined earlier by his mother, Ellen Heron Howell; his grandmother Denise Heron; and siblings Tatum and Piper Howell; and his grandmother Helen Polatajko. Thank you and welcome.

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** I'd also like to welcome Heather Sutherland from Sudbury. She's also here with the Police Association of Ontario. Welcome, Heather.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** How ironic that in light of today's events in Ottawa, I have the honour of introducing three members of the Kingston Police Force here in the gallery today—we are reminded more than ever of how we value your work: Sean Bambrick, Jason Cahill, Ron Lehenhorst.

Also today in the press gallery, we have Dario Paola. Welcome.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I too would like to join the procession and welcome two members of the Port Hope Police Association. They're here with their colleagues today; I had the opportunity to meet with them at 8 o'clock this morning: Sergeant Katie Payton and Sergeant Darren Strongman. Welcome.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to welcome Ian Sweet, Lori Auguste, Nancy Dargie, Paul Perchaluk and Tim Riperon from Waterloo Regional Police Service.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I would like to introduce police officers from Ottawa who are here and thank them for their good and precious service. I know that their colleagues will be very busy today, but we feel we are so well covered by the Ottawa police. On behalf of my residents, I want to say thank you to them.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I would ask the House to help me welcome Henry Geoffroy, who's here from the South Simcoe Police Association in my riding. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** On a day like today, it seems that children give us hope that there are things to look forward to. I'd like to welcome a very special group of young people from my constituency, students from Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in the gallery opposite.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On behalf of our page captain Morgan Walker, from Brant, I would also like to welcome Dr. Kathryn Walker, stepfather Michael Johntson, and grandmother Beverley Gottvald. They're in the members' gallery, and we welcome them here.

If you'll bear with me, I just have a few more.

The former executive assistant to Speaker Stockwell, Maxine Young, and her guest Tim Rowan are here. Welcome.

In the Speaker's gallery today, we have a delegation from the standing committee of the Jiangsu province of the People's Congress of China. Ontario has a long-standing friendship agreement with Jiangsu province, and this delegation visit is an opportune time for us renew our relationship and forge new avenues of co-operation. Let us welcome them warmly and thank them a second time.

Again in the Speaker's gallery today from the Ontario Legislature Internship Program are the 2014-15 interns: Clare Devereux, Christine Eamer, Emily Hewitt, Justin Khorana-Medeiros, Kristy May, Kristen Neagle, Patrick Sackville, Jakub Sikora, Matthew Stanton and Aaron Van Tassel. Welcome, and good luck.

Behind me in the press gallery today, we have the Queen's University student mentorship program held by the legislative press gallery. We welcome those students from Queen's in their journalism course.

Last but not least, I thank you all for your patience in making sure everyone was introduced and doing what we did this morning. It shows again, as has been referenced, the best of us.

## PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS PUBLICATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to direct the members' attention to the books that have been put in your desks today. This is a new publication prepared by the staff of the Legislative Library and Research Services entitled *Provincial Affairs: An Overview for Ontario Legislators of the 41st Parliament*. It contains short briefing papers with background and analysis across 43 different policy areas and directions to further reading and additional resources. An online version of this document will be available on the Intranet very shortly.

It is a publication of some considerable quality, and I'm very proud of the work that our folks have done. So on behalf of the Legislative Library and Research Services, I hope all members will take time to look at it and find it useful in their deliberations.

Your feedback would be appreciated immensely if there are things that you would like us to include or change or add. We plan to make this a regular publication to provide to all members as a service in a very complex world to get you a synopsis of what's going on here at the Legislature. Let me one more time thank the legislative and research staff for doing such a great job. Congratulations.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, and good morning, Speaker. My questions are for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.



Our resolve was tested today, but by us being here, Premier, we have passed. Thank you for carrying on.

I know that you and I agree that governments must focus on delivering prosperity, a better quality of life and accountability in government. I believe that you and I both entered politics and public life to deliver on those goals.

But Ontario isn't what it could be or should be. Under your government, Ontario is home to Canada's largest deficit, larger, in fact, than the federal government and all other provinces' combined. Despite that, you continue to say you will balance the budget by 2017 and that budget targets would be imperilled if the province had to sacrifice investments in jobs, growth or families.

Premier, why do you believe that fiscal prudence is inconsistent with strong jobs, strong growth and strong families?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I actually believe that fiscal prudence and a strong economy are connected. I think that they are absolutely connected, and that's why we have remained committed to our elimination of the deficit by 2017-18. That's what we ran on. That's the plan that we have in place. That's the plan we are executing.

1100

At the same time, we know that making sure that communities have the infrastructure that they need to be able to thrive, understanding that there needs to continue to be investments in people's talent and skills and, quite frankly, partnering with business to make sure that business has the opportunity to flourish—all of those things have to be in place in order for the economy to thrive. Those things are integrally connected in our plan and I believe that is the best course, the best balanced and practical course for the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, you continue to protect your deficits: your deficit of ideas, your deficit of vision and your deficit of hope.

We know that you peaked your deficit at \$19.3 billion and incredibly you have 61% of your deficit reduction left until the end. At the rate you're going, Premier, you won't balance for another 15 years.

Premier, it's time to come clean. Your \$9.2-billion deficit grew to \$10.5 billion last year and is forecasted to \$12.5 billion this very year. Frankly, no one believes you're going to balance. Premier, when will you get back to balance and make Ontario first?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As we have committed and as we are on track to do, we will eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

In terms of the party that presented a hopeful option, a hopeful vision of this province, I think that is the vision that we brought to the people of the province. That is the vision that we enshrined in our budget when we introduced it this past May. Then we ran on that budget and we brought that budget back to the Legislature. That is the plan that we are implementing at this point and that is exactly about the optimism of this province.

It's why I will be travelling with a delegation to China to meet with our friends and partners in Jiangsu province, also in Beijing and Shanghai, to talk about how we can increase that relationship and increase our trade relationship. That's part of our economic growth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, the people of Ontario are suffering under the rigid ideology of this government. We yearn for an approach that is pragmatic—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. I'm giving you some quiet and it will stay that way.

Finish, please.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, when you addressed the Canada 2020 conference, you praised your government for "rejecting strict ideology." But rationalizing waste and scandal from the gas plants, as an example, during a stalled economy is purely ideological.

You threaten Ontario's prosperity, our quality of life and our place in the world. Your government is on a dangerous path. Our debt is five times as large as California's and we're piling on \$11 billion in interest every year. Our credit outlook is negative and the credit agencies don't believe in your reduction timelines.

Premier, how are you going to get us back to balance and make Ontario first?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The same bleak view of the world that the member opposite's party brought to the people of Ontario is the same bleak view that he's espousing again this morning.

In terms of an ideological response to the economic situation, I can't think of a more ideological response than cutting 100,000 jobs and slashing services across government, which is exactly what that party proposed to do.

We are committed to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18. We are investing in the talent and the skills of our people. We are investing in infrastructure that will foster economic growth in the long term and will create jobs and create prosperity in the short term. That's the plan that we ran on, that's the plan that we are implementing, and that is the plan that holds hope for the people of Ontario.

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My new questions are for the Premier. I believe that Ontario is the land of opportunity because it has been fostered by a spirit of free enterprise. Premier, this week is Small Business Week and I'm sure you know that small businesses are how we make Ontario first. In towns and cities across our province, small businesses are the private sector job creators.

I know the struggles of these men and women as I'm a lifelong entrepreneur. I opened my first company when I was 16 years old. But, Premier, under this Liberal government, you have driven out small business. There were

2,700 fewer small businesses in Ontario last year than there were the year before.

**Speaker**, my question is simple: Why are you so keen to drive out small business instead of helping them build themselves up?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne**: I know that the Minister of Economic Development is going to want to comment on what's actually happening in the province, but what I want the people of Ontario to know is that we are very focused on partnering with those very businesses, creating an opportunity for more of those small businesses to start. That's what innovation is about. When we talk about innovation, when we talk about start-up companies, when we talk about commercializing, we're talking about creating an environment where there's enough capital to invest and where there's the opportunity for those businesses to grow.

It's why it's very important, when we go on trade missions, when we travel internationally, that we open doors and make connections for small businesses that otherwise might not be able to develop those relationships in other countries. That's exactly what we are doing when we go to China, when we take this trade mission.

Fostering an environment for small businesses and medium enterprises to grow: That's exactly what we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)**: Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli**: Premier, entrepreneurship is often a hard road. There are going to be lean times. In my early years, I recall taking the chamber of commerce First Dollar of Profit certificate, cracking it open and using that dollar to buy lunch. That's the reality of being in your own business.

Entrepreneurs have an unwavering dream. We dream of creating something that wasn't there before, hiring more people and creating jobs. But here in Ontario, you have created something different. You have created the highest-cost business environment. Now you're going to hit business with a new pension tax, one that businesses say will force them to fire employees and reduce the wages for those employees who are left.

Premier, why don't you listen to the advice of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and abandon this new pension tax?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne**: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)**: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid**: It's a long name, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, though. I have trouble with it too, sometimes.

I have to correct the member opposite, who is talking down the advances that our small business community has made in this province. I don't know if the member is aware of this, but small business jobs have grown since 2012-13 by over 87,000, so the story you're telling is absolutely, patently false. Jobs are growing in our small business community.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop**: Where?

**Hon. Brad Duguid**: The Premier touched on something very, very important. The member asks where they are. Just yesterday, I was meeting with a small business start-up that's coming to China with the Premier, the minister responsible for trade and myself called Chip-Care. They've developed an incredible technology that's going to make blood testing—actually, it's almost a lab in a box, in a hand-held. They're coming to China with us because they're going to build those devices here, they want to market them in China and they want to attract investment.

Those are the kinds of companies that our initiatives are supporting. Those are the kinds of companies that represent our next-generation economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)**: Final supplementary.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli**: The facts hurt; I understand that the facts hurt. But Premier, small business would love to hear some good news from you. Instead, your own Ministry of Finance tells us that growth was actually less than forecast, and you raided the piggy bank to make your deficit look even smaller. Instead of incentives to grow, you promised a new payroll tax. Instead of making Ontario first, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business ranked Ontario eighth out of the 10 provinces when it comes to tax policies. Instead of growing this valuable sector, as the facts showed, there are 2,700 fewer small businesses today.

Premier, small business owners have the answers. When are you going to stop punishing them and start listening to them?

**Hon. Brad Duguid**: Let's talk about the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the high ranking that they've given this province as a result of the work done by my predecessor. Actually, when I was in this post before, our efforts to reduce regulatory burdens across this province by 17%—that focuses very much on small businesses—earned us an A or an A-, the highest in the country when it comes to reducing regulatory burden.

1110

We're working very hard with our small and medium-sized business community. We know that they're the backbone of our economy. That's why we're pleased that they are up 87,000 jobs since 2012-13. We're not going to take the member's advice and talk down those small businesses. They're working hard to grow our economy. We're proud of the work they are doing, we're proud of the growth that they're experiencing in Ontario, and we're going to keep working with them to keep creating jobs and building a strong economy in this province.

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath**: My question is for the Premier. Whether it's cancelling gas plants or bailing out MaRS, this Liberal government likes to keep its secrets in cabinet's cone of silence. And yet this Premier says she's different. She insists that she's going to lead the most transparent government in all of Canada. So has the



cabinet actually been briefed on the privatization of Ontario's local hydro utilities, and will cabinet be discussing that today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As the leader of the third party knows, we asked Ed Clark, a well-respected expert, to lead a group of people, including Frances Lankin and Janet Ecker, to look at how to optimize the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. He has indicated publicly the direction that he thinks we should go. Obviously, we have been in close contact with him as he prepares to release his interim report, and we look forward to his advice and the advice of his council.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, on Monday, the Premier laughed at Ontarians' concerns that she's privatizing assets. But Ed Clark was crystal clear: The government's plan is to sell the distribution network, "bring in private capital" and "sell down" our interest in public hydro utilities.

Is the Premier going to keep denying that her government is privatizing hydro?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, what I am going to keep emphasizing is that we have to take practical and sensible steps in order to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario are working to their highest capacity, in order that we can then take the benefit of those assets and reinvest it in assets that are needed for the future. That is what we put in our plan. That is what we said we were going to do in our budget.

We know that if we don't find the funding to invest in transportation and transportation infrastructure today, then we're not going to have that infrastructure for the future. So it is responsible and practical that we look at these assets, whether it's Hydro One or whether it's the LCBO, to make sure that they are working to the greatest benefit of the people of the province. That's what Ed Clark is doing, and I look forward to his interim report.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, we have records that show that besides meeting with the Premier, Ed Clark met with Ministers Chiarelli, Duguid, Matthews and Sousa, but the section of the memo that lists the key themes of those meetings has been removed.

When the Premier and the members of her inner circle met with Ed Clark, did they talk about selling off our shared public assets like our public hydro utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope that those conversations were wide-ranging, because if you don't have a wide-ranging conversation, if you don't look at what all the options are, then you're not going to come up with the right answer. To only look at the most narrow, ideologically correct version of possibilities is not going to get you to the right answer. So I hope that those conversations were very broad.

We know, because of what Ed Clark has said publicly, the direction that he is going to be suggesting we go. I am very interested in hearing and reading his interim report,

because I think that he has done exactly what we asked him to do, and that is, look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and figure out how we can make them work better for the people of Ontario.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. The same records that we have obtained show that Ed Clark hired multiple consulting firms to put together his plan for selling off shared assets like local hydro utilities. My question is a simple one: Who are these consulting firms?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, we have asked an expert in the field of financing to look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario that are very valuable. We've asked him to, with his panel, give us some advice on how we could optimize those assets. What we didn't do is make a back-of-the-napkin decision, as was made by a previous government, to sell off an asset like the 407, to no long-term benefit of the people of the province. We've taken a very thoughtful and practical approach because we know that we need to be able to make investments in assets that are needed today and into the future, and we know that we need the funding for that. That's why Ed Clark has done the work that he has done, and I look forward to his interim report.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The government was hiring private consultants to help out with the Liberal fire sale and privatization of Ontario's shared public assets like our public hydro utilities; that's clear. If the Premier is not prepared to be transparent with the people of Ontario about who those consultants are, perhaps she can at least tell the people of Ontario how much they've been paid.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Speaker, it's very interesting to me—we have committed to invest \$130 billion in roads, bridges, schools, and transit over the next 10 years because we know that that kind of investment is what is necessary. We also know that we have to be responsible as we move forward. We know that we have to make decisions that are responsible for the long term. In order to do that, we have to talk to people who are experts. We have to talk to people who understand the world of financing, who understand the world of investment and who understand the world of infrastructure. That's what we have done. We asked Ed Clark, with his council, to come up with some advice. I hope—again, I will say to the leader of the third party, I hope he has talked to who he needs to talk to in order to get the very best advice so we make the best long-term decisions for the people of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We know that when it comes to producing business cases, the Premier keeps saying that the dog ate her homework. Ontarians deserve to know whether any of these consulting firms produce a business case for the fire sale of their shared public assets. Will

she make the consultants' reports available for the public immediately?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, the interim report and then the final report of the group that Ed Clark has been working with are not yet finalized, but I'm looking forward to those.

I just want to step back and talk about why we are doing this. Our plan to maximize the value of the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario is not a whim on our part. It is actually a very important part of our plan to make investments, and the investments that we want to make are investments that will have long-term benefit. So investing in regional express rail; investing in 15-minute GO service, full-day, two-way GO service; investing in the Brampton Queen Street rapid transit line; investing in the downtown relief line; Hamilton light rail transit; the next phase of the LRT in Ottawa; expansion of highways like number 7, to make sure that communities are able to thrive; that's why we're doing this. That's why this is so important and it's so important that we get it right.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Since 2011, your government has known the details of the loan agreement with MaRS phase 2, yet has never found the right time to be either open or transparent about it. In 2008, the economic recession hit ARE, and their share value plummeted over 60%. After three years of stalled development, in 2011 your government provided MaRS a \$224-million loan to complete the project as ARE could no longer meet their obligations. No financial institution was willing to back the project with only 10% of the building pre-leased—30% to 40% lower than industry standards. Premier, at the time of the loan, what terms of the contract between ARE and MaRS were amended to protect this risky taxpayer investment?

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I've made it very clear—and I've said it in the Legislature, I've said it in committee and I've said it outside of this Legislature—that we're doing everything we can to bring forward requests for information and that anything that's not commercially sensitive will absolutely be shared. That's fair; it's what we can do and it's what we should do. We're happy to be as transparent as possible about all of that.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, this is the difference between that party and our party. Yes, MaRS is a viable project—MaRS phase 2—that ran into some trouble during the recession. Yes, we were there to support them, to try to do everything we could to see this project through, unlike the PCs, whose position quite clearly was to let that project rot in the ground.

We're talking about a sector with 51,000 high-paying jobs, a sector that contributes \$39 billion to our economy. This is an important sector, Mr. Speaker. We're going to

keep working to create jobs in the sector, even if the Tories—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Back to the Premier: Premier, your minister failed to answer. ARE originally took all the risk with phase 2 by supplying both the capital and management of the project. The only contribution from MaRS was providing the land, valued at \$15 million.

Understandably, ARE was in line to receive the lion's share of revenue from the leasing of MaRS 2. Up until 2011, MaRS was only due \$715,000 per year from the total leasing revenue from phase 2. When you provided MaRS a loan, what did you forget to amend in the MaRS-ARE agreement that is now costing us an additional \$65 million, or did you just forget that ARE continued to be in line for 95% of the leasing revenues from phase 2?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I was available and stood for 10 and a half hours in estimates committee and answered all the questions the opposition had for me. I think what's important now is to speak about how important MaRS is to our economy. Let me say something that neither comes from the opposition nor the government. This comes from Life Sciences Ontario, which is made up of the 1,600 companies that work in the bioscience sector. This is what they had to say, and they released this yesterday:

"The government of Ontario's support for MaRS is an example of Ontario's leadership, and with leadership come risks.

"Now is not the time to second-guess the commitment that our government has shown by investing in innovation lest we rather seek to be followers and late adopters in this new global economy, and live with the associated economic fallout.

"This bold, long-term vision is the driving force behind MaRS and has enabled the Discovery District to become an international icon for innovation."

Mr. Speaker, that was the vision of Ernie Eves in the previous government. That's our vision today. We stand by it. We're going to keep creating jobs. We're going to continue to grow a strong biosciences cluster in Ontario.

## TRANSIT FUNDING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Premier. The government promised annual "dedicated funding" for transit and transportation and in fact set up the Trillium Trust fund, which can only be used for infrastructure. But here's the catch: There's no legal guarantee that any money will ever make it to the Trillium Trust or make it to transit and infrastructure.

This is the Premier who insisted she was going to be different, but the Premier's "dedicated" plan doesn't actually dedicate anything. Does the Premier have a different definition of "dedicated" than everyone else?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** It is, as has been stated in the budget, in the fall economic statement, in the creation of



the Trillium Trust to ensure that funds that are associated with the sale of specific assets or any of the initiatives that we put forward go to the trust dedicated to transit. We made that very clear. That's how we'll proceed, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Back to the Premier: Without long-term dedicated funding, of which there is none, there is no long-term transit planning. That has left people in my riding and across Ontario packed into overcrowded public transit waiting for an actual solution. There is a loophole in the Premier's "dedicated" transit funding plan so big you could actually drive a bus through that.

Will the Premier close that loophole and actually make dedicated funding dedicated? Would you answer my question this time? Thank you.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, the third party has put forward their proposals that include the very issue that they're now denying. They have put in their program—they copied exactly what we put forward in terms of assets. They look at optimizing, maximizing the values and ensuring that any of the assets that are sold are then dedicated to the Trillium Trust that was developed for that purpose. They ran on that premise.

Furthermore, they said they would even do more. Now, they're afraid to talk about the very issues, to look at ways to do just that.

The Trillium Trust was established. Any assets that are sold will go to the trust dedicated to transit. We have a plan for transit. We have a plan for public infrastructure that's going to help grow our economy, and we're going to continue to do just that.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question this morning is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Under Premier Wynne's leadership, our government has placed strong emphasis on supporting small, rural and northern communities across Ontario. Our government's economic plan is targeted to create jobs and spur economic growth, and we're focused on investing in people, investing in infrastructure and supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Speaker, can the minister inform this House on how our government is investing in our northern Ontario communities to ensure they have the tools they need to be competitive in the global market?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to thank the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for the question. Certainly, one of the programs that I am really proud to chair, in my capacity as Minister of Northern Development and Mines, is the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, although, recently, actually, I had one where the opposition was actually belittling the important work of the NOHFC, particularly related to our partnerships with the private sector.

The facts absolutely speak for themselves. Speaker, over the last decade, the NOHFC has supported over

6,200 projects, creating or sustaining almost 24,000 jobs in northern Ontario and, may I say, benefiting every single community across the north. The fund has also invested over \$950 million over that time frame, leveraging \$3.5 billion in additional investments for our province.

Our government remains absolutely committed to creating strong partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continuing economic growth with certainly a very strong emphasis on northern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's clear that the hard-working minister is a strong advocate for northern Ontario communities through work with the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. Agriculture is one industry that plays an important role in every community across the province, whether it's small, rural, urban or northern Ontario, including my great riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I know that northern Ontario holds a lot of potential when it comes to agriculture. Identifying and acting upon opportunities to support the agricultural industry is critical in building a prosperous Ontario. I think we can all agree that efficient and modern infrastructure is the cornerstone for a strong northern economy.

I'm just going to ask the minister again to please inform the House on what our government is doing to support a strong, sustainable agricultural industry in northern Ontario through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Again, thanks for the question. Certainly, one of the exciting things about the economy in Ontario is indeed the agricultural sector. The board was recently in New Liskeard actually, and we were able to announce close to \$2 million there in funding through the Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance to install tile drainage and clear land on over 3,800 acres of land in northern Ontario. May I say, Mr. Speaker, the general manager of that alliance is Stephanie Vanthof, the daughter of the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane—clearly the bright one in the family.

This tile drainage program is remarkable, and I know that many members have spoken about this. This allows farmers to get out on the land weeks, if not a month, earlier than they were expecting. It has dramatically increased the return on investment for those farmers. This is great for all across the north. A number of farmers told me directly, when we were in New Liskeard, that with the addition of tile drainage, they were actually able to double their yield.

This is a great program, a good example of economic development and support through the Ministry of Agriculture for some great economic development in northern Ontario.

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#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Earlier this month,

Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller released his report *Managing New Challenges*, where he recommends closing Algonquin Provincial Park to commercial timber harvesting. In his report, Mr. Miller stated that closing the park to timber harvesting could somehow be done without negatively affecting the local economy.

Everyone in the industry understands that the commissioner is completely flawed in his premise. Furthermore, just last year your ministry released a report affirming the practice of responsible timber harvest in the park.

The people of my riding and across the province need assurances from your government that it will continue to allow Algonquin to be a multi-use park. Minister, will you stand in your place today and pledge to the people of Ontario that you will reject the commissioner's recommendation for Algonquin park?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member for the question. I understand how important issues related to Algonquin park are to him as a member and to his entire constituency.

Having said that, I will also say in the House here today that we very much respect the work of the Environmental Commissioner. He has made commentary on the work that I do within my ministry and on the work that other ministries do as well. So we respect his work, we take his report and we will thoroughly review what he has recommended to us.

I am pleased, I would say, that the EC has recognized my ministry's transparency and openness on a variety of issues, and we're thankful for that. In the supplementary I will respond more directly to the member's question and speak about what we have done very recently through the park management plan and the amendment that came into that plan and the work that will be going on in relation to this park on a go-forward basis.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I hope to hear that. I'm looking forward to it, Minister, because this is not the time for parsed statements or unclear language. Allowing for the continuation of the timber harvest in Algonquin park is vital to the thousands of people in my riding and across eastern Ontario who rely on that for their livelihood.

In addition, it has been demonstrated, time and time again, that Algonquin park has the most stringent and comprehensive management system in the world. The multi-use function of Algonquin park makes it a world leader in responsible resource management, and the millions of tourists who visit the park each year are a testament to that fact.

Minister, I'm asking you again to do the right thing and unequivocally dismiss the commissioner's recommendation. Will you do that today?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I thank the member for the supplementary. Of course, I have no intention, as the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, of shutting down forestry within Algonquin park. Having said that, the member will also be aware that that park management plan and the amendment within it did take 96,000 additional hectares, about a year ago, into protection.

The important point for me to make to the member and to his constituency is that in no way, shape or form did that extra environmental protection impact the forestry operations that are going on in Algonquin. In fact, we can confirm for everybody who relies on forestry for their economic sustainability and is affected with logging in the park: It's still whole. There's plenty of work.

As the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I went through the forestry situation in 2005-06. We're seeing a rebound in forestry right now. All the people who are making an economy off the logging in the park are still able to do that. We're proud of that. We think we've landed it. It's a multi-use facility where a park has been for 150 years, and we see it remaining so in the foreseeable future.

## PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. Prior to the last election, you promised that PSWs in this province would be getting a raise, and that's something that most people in this province support.

The problem, however, is that a number of PSWs are not getting that raise. Imagine the surprise, the shock and the sense of betrayal that the workers at the Canadian Red Cross in my riding found out when they got this letter. It reads:

"The wage increase does not apply to every personal support worker.... Our low acuity program and adult day programs are not included in the list of approved functional centres for the wage increase in 2014...."

"Based on the criteria outlined by the government of Ontario, your wage will not be changing this year."

Premier, why did you break your word to these PSWs?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I find it pretty rich, coming from the NDP. This was an initiative—and I have to say, an important one—by our government that was in the platform during the election. It was in our budget as well. We committed, quite frankly, to respecting our PSWs across this province by increasing their wages by \$4 an hour over the next three years.

As I said yesterday, our PSWs, our personal support workers—there are literally thousands of them working hard, as we speak, at this moment, helping people, helping our seniors in our homes, helping others in the community. We made a commitment not only to increase their wages so that they are respected for the hard work that they do every day, but also to engage in a program for sustainability of the sector to make sure that they're not only valued but that they have the supports in place so that they can succeed and provide that important care that they do every day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The problem is, like most promises made by Liberals, there's a "but" to it. In this particular case, a number of PSWs in my riding are not going to get the raise, and it's the same for other PSWs around this province. So my question to you is a very



direct one: Will you fund all PSWs working in the home care sector? Yes or no?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, we've worked closely with the sector, with the stakeholders and our partners in the sector, to determine a program which will guarantee the sustainability of the sector and increase the wages.

Again, I just have to reiterate that they not only didn't have it in their platform—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A reminder for members on this side not to talk while the answer is being given, and a reminder on the opposite side to listen to the answer. Thank you.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, they not only didn't have it in their platform; they voted against our budget that contained this measure and catalyzed an election which allowed us, fortunately, to continue this process.

We've added, in fact, 2,500 PSWs in our long-term-care centres since 2008 and three million additional PSW hours over the last three years. We're committed to this program.

I'm not going to take lessons from the NDP on this. This was the leadership—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —of Ontario and the Liberal Party—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services.

In my riding of Davenport, many of my constituents rely on the support that the social assistance system provides, both through Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. These programs offer support for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, and it is very important to my constituents that we provide this assistance to their neighbours in times of need.

However, I have heard from some constituents who receive social assistance that they find it difficult to afford the costs of living. In my riding of Davenport, the Abrigo Centre and the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre offer a number of important services, such as employment linking programs and crisis services for women. They have also told me that some social assistance recipients have trouble making ends meet.

Minister, can you tell us what your ministry is doing to support our most vulnerable citizens?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'd like to thank the member for Davenport for this question.

Of course, continuing to reform social assistance is a very important part of our government's work. We want to improve the social services system and make sure people in need can participate fully in our communities and in the economy.

It is to that end that, over the past two years, our government has increased OW rates by \$50 per month for single adults with no children. This year, we increased our investment in social assistance by continuing to lift the lowest rates and increasing support for individuals with disabilities.

The rate increases announced in the 2014 budget are now in effect, including a 1% increase for families receiving Ontario Works and for individuals with disabilities who rely on ODSP. Those individuals living north of the 50th parallel are getting an additional \$50 per month for the first person in their family and \$25 for each additional family member.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** In summary—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sorry. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Thank you very much, Minister. I'm sure my constituents will be very pleased to know about the rate increases that are coming into effect this fall and the government's commitment to continue to transform the social assistance system.

My constituents often mention their desire to become financially independent and move off the social assistance program. These individuals tell me they don't want or choose to be dependent on social assistance. However, they need support in order to establish the right skills so they can successfully find employment.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: Minister, can you please inform this House of the actions your ministry has taken to assist these recipients of social assistance to fulfill their desire for employment?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** These changes that we're making will promote greater independence by improving outcomes and encouraging work. For example, all social assistance clients will have access to a simple, flexible employment benefit that helps with their costs. Now people can earn up to \$200 a month without affecting their assistance. For earnings above \$200, assistance rates are now reduced by 50 cents for every dollar earned. This allows clients to gain a foothold in the labour force, improve their incomes and move towards greater independence.

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Our government has also made significant progress on the employment supports available for people receiving social assistance. These positive changes include: people who leave social assistance can go back to work and keep their drug, dental and vision care benefits if they don't have comparable benefits from their employer; and ODSP recipients who leave the program for a job can return to ODSP quickly if their job does not work out. We believe these are all very important and positive changes.

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. After a decade of missed deadlines, the Highway 404 extension was built on the assumption that

the project would use an asphalt surface instead of a concrete surface; however, the highway extension is in fact a concrete surface. This means that residents whose properties back on to the 404 extension are not sufficiently protected from the noise of the highway as they expected they would be. Concrete surfaces deflect sound—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** —whereas asphalt surfaces absorb sound. It sounds like a jet taking off, constantly, 24/7. This is not what these neighbours agreed to.

My constituents want to know what you are going to do about it right now, not in a year's time.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to thank the member opposite for that question regarding the Highway 404 extension. I also want to take a quick moment to thank her for being there on that very special day for York region and for her community when I was in a position to stand alongside the new member from Newmarket—Aurora and the new member from Barrie—and the member who is, in fact, asking me this question today—to be together there with all of our municipal partners from that area to celebrate the 13-kilometre extension of Highway 404.

That's a \$100-million investment in crucial transportation infrastructure that that member stood at the announcement for, the official opening—and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Research and Innovation was there that day as well. We all witnessed the member who is asking this very question being there with us to celebrate that opening. So I'm a bit confused about these questions, because I know in lots of communities across Ontario, a \$100-million investment in crucial public transportation infrastructure would indeed be celebrated.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I find it fascinating that the minister doesn't want to deal with the actual issue because, of course, people have been waiting. As I said, this has been decades that people have been waiting. There was no question about that.

What they didn't know was that the wrong assumptions had been made in the analysis of the kind of road that was to be built. What they didn't know, until there was traffic on the road, was what had in fact taken place.

Now we have a concrete road which, at the very least, needs to be addressed. The assumption that the road was built on was that it would be asphalt.

Minister my question is simple: Do you think that a chain-link fence is going to do it? We don't.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I appreciate that follow-up question, of course, on this same topic around this \$100-million investment that our government has made to extend Highway 404 by 13 crucial kilometres in that part of York region. I have had the chance, since that day that I referenced in my initial answer, when that member opposite stood beside me and my colleagues to celebrate the official opening for this 13-kilometre extension, to

speak with Mayor Hackson from East Gwillimbury. We've had a great conversation. The mayor is aware of the fact, as I believe the municipality is, that the Ministry of Transportation is undertaking a follow-up noise study for that particular area. We'll have those results over the next number of weeks.

I think it's also important to note that the new Highway 404 four-lane extension is taking 22,000 vehicles a day off local roads, making the community safer, while reducing travel times for commuters and commercial vehicles. It is no wonder that the member asking that question was so happy on the day of the opening to stand alongside us and celebrate this investment.

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My question is to the Premier. The Premier met with the parents and the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake and promised to listen to their concerns and demands about keeping Parliament Oak Public School open. Two of those students are here today.

They told her how much Parliament Oak school means to the children, the families and the community. It is the heart of the old town, and it should be part of its future too. Instead, the community is having to raise \$100,000 for legal expenses to try to save the school, because this government will not grant them an appeal of the accommodation review process that led to the decision to close the school. Why won't the Premier help the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake save their school?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know the Minister of Education is going to want to speak to this. I want to just welcome your constituents to the House today, and I just want to reassure them that it is very important to us that school boards have the opportunity to make decisions about their communities.

I don't think that it is in the best interests of education in this province that every local decision be made at Queen's Park. I think it's very important that elected school trustees work with the community to make decisions about the best delivery of programs to the students in their constituencies. I know the Minister of Education will want to speak to this specific situation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** The Premier will be in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Thursday and Friday. She needs to explain to the community why she will not stand up for their school and why the government has divided communities across the province with a policy of closing schools.

Over the summer, the lord mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Dave Eke, met with the mayors and the councillors from across the province. It's not just a Niagara-on-the-Lake issue. They were looking to join forces and oppose this government's policy of closing schools in smaller rural communities.

Why is the government forcing communities across the province to defend their local schools instead of doing its job to protect them and make sure we uphold



high-quality education for the students who are here today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I do need to confirm what the Premier just said, which is that it's local school boards that make decisions about which schools kids go to, what the school boundaries are, and whether or not a school is open or closed.

The community did ask the ministry to review the school accommodation process that went before the school closure. The authority that we have to review is to look at whether the prescribed procedure was followed. The prescribed procedure was followed, and I have no authority to override the decision of the local school board, which is the way it should be.

It's very important that, as we have local elections coming up on this next Monday, which includes local elections for trustees, people all across the province understand how important it is, because there are many decisions that are made by local trustees—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
New question.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** My question is to the last speaker, the very erudite guardian of knowledge acquisition for the province, the Minister of Education. Minister, I know that improving educational outcomes is a top priority of our government, and after speaking to constituents, I know, and I've heard, that our investments in early childhood education are very important to them. Full-day kindergarten is the most significant transformation in our education system in over a generation. Students in full-day kindergarten are now better prepared to enter grade 1 and will be more successful in school. Specifically, a recent study compared students enrolled in full-day kindergarten and those in half-day programs, and it showed that overall, these students were better prepared when they went into grade 1.

Minister, can you please tell this House what you are doing to ensure that all students have access to full-day kindergarten?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you very much to the member from Beaches—East York for his question. He is absolutely right: FDK implementation is an important milestone. We're very proud of our full-day kindergarten program, which is the biggest transformation of our education system in a generation.

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The member opposite who was just heckling may be very interested to know that to date, we have spent \$1.5 billion on implementing full-day kindergarten, plus \$1 billion in capital improvements to schools to allow for the implementation of full-day kindergarten.

This positions Ontario as a North American leader in the provision of education for our littlest students. It positions Ontario as a leader in education.

I do want to confirm what the member has said. We have a study conducted by Queen's and McMaster which shows us that the students in FDK—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm very excited to hear of these dollars that have been well spent in our schools, which I understand will benefit 265,000 children who are enrolled in full-day kindergarten at 3,600 schools across Ontario. This is a great initiative that will not only benefit these children but also the families and the teachers across the province.

Minister, can you please elaborate on some of these other benefits that full-day kindergarten brings to Ontario?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** We want to give kids the absolutely best start in life. Not only are the kids benefiting from the full-day kindergarten program, so are families and teachers across the province.

Ontario families who enrol a child in full-day kindergarten save up to \$6,500 per child on child care costs. With the funding that I mentioned previously, we've built about 3,500 new kindergarten classrooms. We've got 3,800 additional teaching positions and 10,000 ECEs who are working with little children in full-day kindergarten.

The studies from Queen's and McMaster have shown that students with two years of FDK have been found to have significant improvement in social competence development, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge development. This is a great program to give our children the best start at future success.

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, for months, we've been trying to get air quality data for the Beachville area from your ministry. People who live there want to know the test results since the last public report was issued in 2003, but all your ministry has given us is six months of data. Now we're being told that we need to file an FOI request, which will cost \$600, in order to get the information.

Minister, are you honestly telling me that the people of Beachville need to pay your government \$600 to find out if the air they are breathing is safe?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I think the member for Oxford and I have been working very closely on this file. I'm glad he has reintroduced the subject today.

I was under the impression that the ministry was co-operating fully with the member opposite and the community. I am disappointed to hear that there are some outstanding concerns, but I will certainly take them to heart as I have before. I will look into them, and I promise him an answer as promptly as possible—within a week, I hope.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Thank you very much for that answer, Minister. I appreciate that, and I appreciate that

your ministry may not have been as forthcoming with information as they might have been.

The problem is, I did receive a letter with your signature on it, and this is where this question comes from. Your government claims to be open and transparent, but the people are being refused information about the quality of the air they're breathing because that whole span of time is missing.

It isn't classified business information, which the letter suggested, and it's not protected.

The Operations Manual for Air Quality Monitoring in Ontario, produced by your ministry in March 2008, says very clearly that monitoring data as well as quarterly and annual reports are to be made publicly available.

All the people of Beachville want is to know that the air that they have been breathing is safe. They've started the FOI process. Minister, will you do the right thing and refund the FOI fees and release the air quality monitoring data from 2003 forward?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** One of the matters that does concern me is that we have the application of regulation 419, whether you're in Sarnia, where we have concerns, or in Oxford.

This is very top of mind to me. I'm working very closely with the deputy. The Premier has asked us to up our game, both in being more transparent and more responsive. I will be the first to say that while I think there are great efforts being made by the ministry, they are not at the standard of responsiveness that we want.

I would caution the member opposite. You are from a party, my dear friend, which suggested we could do with 100,000 less public servants. I would argue that the Ministry of the Environment is not an overly funded ministry, and resources are scarce. I will take that to be a spend question, not a cut question, and would ask, as we move forward in budget deliberations, that you have some empathy for my ministry, sir.

## SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, one of the most important aspects of a person's life really is the fact that they have a job, a job that is meaningful and fairly compensated.

In Ontario today, we have a 70% unemployment rate for people who have a disability. For every 100 people we take off of ODSP and put into the workplace in meaningful and competitively paid jobs, we're saving the economy about a million dollars.

A 70% unemployment rate for people with disabilities in the province of Ontario is, frankly, unacceptable. What action will this government take to lower this unacceptable level of unemployment?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I want to point out to the member that in our 2013 budget, our government established the Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, composed of government and corporate leaders, to champion the hiring of people

with disabilities. In fact, this initiative is led by the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, so I will be referring the supplementary to him.

However, in general, I'm very encouraged by the interest that this member, the member from Essex, is showing in this very important topic. It seems that we share a very similar concern. So I'm really puzzled why the member did not support our budget in 2014 because, very specifically, we are investing \$810 million over three years to help those with disabilities, and in that funding, there is a very important employment and modernization fund to address the issue that he is speaking to.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I repeat: A decent job with decent pay is what we all aspire to. It's what we want for ourselves, it's what we dream of when we grow up, and it's what we expect for our children as well.

The Ontario Disability Employment Network has long been an effective advocate for people with disabilities who want the very same thing we all do. They believe much more can be done.

A 70% unemployment rate for people with disabilities is simply unacceptable. Why is this government missing in action when it comes to creating good jobs for those people in our province with disabilities?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I followed everything in the member's question with interest until his final statement, which I think went in a totally different direction.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we're a leader internationally when it comes to building accessibility into Ontario. That's good for people with disabilities. It's also good for our economy. I think that's something that the member and I can agree on. We have an incredible wealth of talent that currently is facing barriers to employment. We fully recognize that; it's a priority for us.

Studies have shown that you're looking at \$7 billion to \$10 billion over time that's being lost to our gross domestic product as a result of this lack of accessibility. So we're as determined as you are. In fact, we have a groundbreaking piece of legislation here in the province of Ontario. We're working with people with disabilities and we're working with leaders in that community to remove those barriers. It's a priority for us from a social perspective, but it's also a priority for us from an economic perspective.

## VISITORS

**Mr. John Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence. They're a little late for question period, but I'd like to introduce three members of the Ottawa Police Service: Brian Samuel, Daniel Brennan and Jim Elves. They're here on behalf of the Police Association of Ontario. I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park and to thank them and all their colleagues for all they do to protect us in the city of Ottawa, especially given the circumstances that we find in our community today.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1200 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** We have three guests from the city of North Bay who are here for my private member's bill. They are Patricia Cliche, chair of the North Bay and Area Community Drug Strategy Committee; Detective Constable Brad Reaume of the North Bay Police Service; and Detective Constable Tom Robertson of the North Bay Police Service.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I would also like to welcome to the Legislature today Brendan Johnston of the Lindsay Police Association, and Jeff Chartier and Mark Ballantine of the Peterborough Police Association. I'll be meeting with them shortly. Thank you.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BELGRAVE FOWL SUPPER

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's my pleasure to rise today to applaud over 540 volunteers, family and friends who helped organize the 66th annual turkey supper in Belgrave this past month. Belgrave is my home hamlet, if you will.

I was lucky enough to be home, along with over 1,000 others from our broader community, to share a delicious Thanksgiving meal. I can tell you, with over 1,000 pounds of turkey, 1,600 pounds of potatoes, 224 turnips and 1,080 pies, there was surely no shortage of excellent food. In fact, there were even second helpings of dessert.

Seeing people come together for a tradition like this, unlike any other, is truly humbling. It so clearly emulates what it is to be a community, and I'm honoured to be part of that.

To give you a sense of this community, Belgrave is a hamlet of approximately 200 people. It says a lot that in 2014 they can attract a larger community of over 1,000 people to give thanks and celebrate the bounty of the harvest. This community support is truly valued because it is the one key fundraising event of the year for the Belgrave Community Centre.

As a member of this House, I have the honour of meeting and interacting with so many volunteers in organizations across my riding and province. Seeing the passion, selflessness and generosity of these individuals, day in and day out, is truly remarkable.

Volunteers are the cornerstones of our community, and we would not have amazing events like the Belgrade Fowl Supper if it weren't for them. I thank them.

### SHOOTINGS IN OTTAWA

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I know that our leaders are coming in a few minutes to speak, but I just wanted to

give—because I know we're all thinking the same thing—a real, great vote of thanks to our incredible Sergeant-at-Arms and to all of our security staff here. I know that we're feeling their presence, and many members are saying thank you to them in their own ways. We should probably do that more often than today. I just wanted us to say thank you to them and give them a round of applause, actually. Thank you, Sarge.

I also wanted to mention that I'm a United Church minister, as many folks know. Today on Twitter I was absolutely moved by the incredible outflowing from all of our faith organizations—all faiths across this country—calling for calm, calling for peace and calling for love.

## DIWALI

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** I've had the opportunity over the past few weeks to attend a number of celebrations of Diwali, also known as the festival of lights, which is celebrated by the Sikh, Hindu and Jain communities.

Diwali ushers in new beginnings, and it is a time to celebrate with family and friends. Diwali is celebrated in many ways—through prayer and worship, the lighting of candles and a grand feast—but most of all, it is a time to be with loved ones and to be thankful for what we have.

It was wonderful to see all the families that came together in our community to celebrate. I would like to specifically thank the Premier for joining us in attending the 34th annual Diwali Gala organized by the Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization. It was fantastic to have her in Brampton.

I've also had the opportunity to attend the South Asian Focus and the Indo-Canada Arts Council Diwali Festival of Lights. It was a great event and I was fortunate to be part of it.

Speaker, we also had the opportunity to celebrate Diwali here at Queen's Park. It was a success and a wonderful time to share this festive occasion with my fellow colleagues and their guests.

I want to wish everyone a very safe and happy Diwali.

## THE SHABBAT PROJECT

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I am proud to rise today to recognize the work of the organizers of the Shabbat Project, a unique, international grassroots Jewish identity movement that unites all Jews to observe one full Shabbat together.

As the sun sets this Friday evening, Jewish people around the world will come together to observe Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, a day of rest. Jews from all walks of life and all corners of the world will unite to celebrate Shabbat in accordance with Jewish law.

The Shabbat Project was introduced in South Africa in 2013. Following its success, the International Shabbat Project was born. It now has 1,500 partners in 340 cities around the world.

One of the unique aspects of the initiative is that all factional identities—all denominations, affiliations,

ideologies and, yes, even political differences—are put to the side. The tagline of the Shabbat Project is “Keeping it together.”

This Thursday, I am privileged to take part in one of the GTA community events. I, along with 3,000 women across the GTA, many from my own riding of Thornhill, will be participating in a Challah Bake. Challah is a ritual bread eaten on the Sabbath evening. I look forward to sharing in this most commendable experience.

I thank the many volunteers and grassroots community organizers for their tireless efforts in preparation for this Shabbat. Shabbat shalom.

### SHOOTINGS IN OTTAWA

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Today, as the House will know, the Ombudsman released his report on his investigation into unlicensed child care in Ontario, an investigation I called for in January of last year. I had intended to use my statement today to comment on that significant and important report. However, due to the events in Ottawa this morning, those comments will be made at a later time.

I would like to use this statement to express my condolences and support for those directly affected by the situation in our nation's capital. As Remembrance Day approaches, today we are reminded of the dangers faced by our armed forces, and in this case, right here in our own country.

I understand that the soldier who died this morning was a reservist from my hometown of Hamilton. I am shocked by this event, and I extend my sincere condolences to his friends, family and colleagues.

Also today, members of the Police Association of Ontario are visiting Queen's Park, and I had the pleasure of meeting with some of them from the Hamilton Police Service. We often take their presence for granted, and it is at a time like this that we truly appreciate the job they do and remember that their job is to put themselves in danger's way, to serve and protect us. They deserve our sincere gratitude.

As elected representatives, we think, with concern, of our colleagues in Ottawa. We stand with them to uphold our democratic traditions and to ensure the important work we do on behalf of the people who sent us here continues.

### JEAN PAUL ST. PIERRE

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's with a heavy heart that I rise today to honour a good friend, a wonderful husband and family man, and an honourable local leader.

In the early morning hours of Saturday, October 18, Jean Paul St. Pierre passed away peacefully at his home in Russell, Ontario. My heart and the hearts of everyone who crossed paths with JP, as most of us called him, were deeply saddened upon hearing the news.

Our thoughts and prayers immediately turned to his wife, Jocelyn, and his family. It's near impossible to

comprehend the feeling of loss for them during this difficult time.

Johnny, as I heard her call him on many occasions, was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. As mayor of Russell township, as warden of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, and as chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, he led with compassion, respect and understanding. These qualities, which he brought to his public life, were mirrored in his personal life as well. He was always warm and kind, always willing to listen or help, and his doors were always open.

### 1510

C'était un homme de très grande bonté, chaleureux et exemplaire.

I would be remiss, Speaker, if I didn't mention that he was passionate about the game of golf. He was one of the top golfers in Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, and I will always regret that I never did have the opportunity to join him on the golf course.

Alongside the residents of Russell township and the united counties of Prescott-Russell, I want to offer my sincere condolences to Jocelyn and her family. We've lost a wonderful person, a strong leader and a true gentleman.

Nous avons perdu un homme très grand, un vrai leader et, pour plusieurs, un ami.

Rest in peace my friend Mr. Mayor.

### HALTON FRESH FOOD BOX

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell you about a special program in Halton, but before I start, I just want to let you know that our thoughts and prayers are with our friends, neighbours, family and colleagues in Ottawa during this very difficult and challenging time. This is a time for all of us to come together, and we have in this House. I want to once again emphasize that our thoughts are with our colleagues and friends in Ottawa.

I rise today to tell you about a very special program in Halton. For 10 years, a small team of volunteers have been gathering once a week in schools, gyms, churches and halls in my riding and surrounding areas to pack boxes. These aren't ordinary boxes; these are containers chock full of the freshest vegetables Halton has to offer. It's all part of a terrific initiative called the Halton Fresh Food Box program.

I recently dropped into a 10-year anniversary celebration for this great program. For a decade, this wonderful initiative has been providing needy Halton families with tasty, delectable, locally grown, fresh veggies. The idea is to get young families and those in need of assistance—like seniors, newcomers and the less fortunate—access to the best produce grown in our backyards.

The program is funded in part by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The Halton Fresh Food Box program makes it easier for residents in our community to put healthy, nutritious and delicious food on the table. That's import-



ant because when the food on our plates is from our own backyards, it not only tastes better, but it keeps our communities, families and our local economies healthy.

### OKTOBERFEST

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Just last week in Kitchener-Waterloo, the 36th annual Oktoberfest concluded after nine long days of the Bavarian festival, which is the largest Bavarian festival in North America—of course, next to the largest Bavarian festival in Munich, Germany. Over the course of the nine days, tens of thousands of people experienced what it's like to truly be German in Kitchener-Waterloo, with a strong tradition of German culture in the region of Waterloo.

Some \$22 million dollars is generated through its economic impacts throughout the nine days of the festival, raising millions of dollars for not-for-profit charitable organizations within the community. This couldn't have happened without the resolve and dedication of the hundreds of volunteers who work year-round to ensure that Oktoberfest is one of the best and brightest festivals in Ontario.

I had the pleasure of attending opening ceremonies bright and early on Friday morning. I was honoured to be joined by our interim leader, Jim Wilson, who participated in this year's keg-tapping festivities.

Again, I'd like to thank the volunteers for 36 years of success. Prost!

### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's my pleasure to stand before the House today and share my experiences as a guest at the full-day kindergarten classes at St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School in Port Hope. I'd like to thank Principal Egan, Ms. Rakkas, and Mrs. McAllister, who were delightful hosts, for providing me with the opportunity to meet their classes of clever and energetic kindergarten students.

St. Anthony is one of 32 schools in my riding that offer full-day kindergarten. In the words of Principal Egan, this program supports the philosophy of developing the whole person by establishing a strong foundation for the early years by providing young children with a play-based learning experience. This enables them to make a smooth transition to grade 1 and to improve their prospects of success in their lives beyond school.

In more school good news, tomorrow afternoon I will have the pleasure of welcoming to the Legislature Ms. Morrison's grade 4 and 5 students from V.P. Carswell Elementary School in Trenton and Mr. Milligan's grade 10 civics class from Campbellford high school. It's always a pleasure to introduce young minds to new experiences and adventures.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements. I appreciate them. Now, I think

I'm going to turn to the member from Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

### VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thanks very much, Speaker. In all the commotion today at the end of question period, who do I see but a couple of my constituents. I just want to thank them for coming today, Jim McParland and his daughter Charlotte. Charlotte is on a reading week from Trent. Thank you for being here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Ms. Elliott assumes ballot item number 29 and Ms. Jones assumes ballot item number 20.

### SPECIAL REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I also beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a report from the Ombudsman of Ontario regarding the Ministry of Education's responses to complaints and concerns relating to unlicensed daycare providers.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITIES ACT (FENTANYL PATCH FOR PATCH RETURN POLICY), 2014 LOI DE 2014 POUR PROTÉGER NOS COLLECTIVITÉS (POLITIQUE D'ÉCHANGE DE TIMBRES DE FENTANYL)

Mr. Fedeli moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches / Projet de loi 33, Loi visant à réduire l'abus de timbres de fentanyl.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** This bill would implement a fentanyl patch return policy pioneered in my riding of Nipissing in communities across Ontario to help them deal with what is becoming a growing concern from a health, social and criminal standpoint. Fentanyl patches go for about \$400 on the market. This bill would give health care practitioners across Ontario greater control

over fentanyl patches, which currently are being sold illicitly for large sums of money to addicts. This would require that you bring your used patches back in order to get a new one, and stop the spread of these patches.

### SHOOTINGS IN OTTAWA

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Government House leader on a point of order.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to the fallen member of the Canadian Armed Forces in the tragic events that occurred in Ottawa earlier today, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we agree? Agreed.

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to rise today to speak to the events in Ottawa that have touched all of us in Ontario and across the country. I know I speak for all elected officials when I say that our thoughts and our prayers are with all of those in Ottawa, and our prayers are for their safety and security.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I would like to offer my condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the soldier who was killed. We will—we have, already, lowered flags at Queen's Park to mark this tragic event.

I also want to thank the RCMP, the OPP, local Ottawa police services, paramedics and all of the security officials for their quick response and their continued vigilance. We are confident in their ability, and that all of us are being kept safe by our safe responders, and will continue to be so.

1520

We will continue to monitor the events closely and will provide updates as they become available. I know that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has briefed members of the opposition.

Today's events are tragic for the province and for our country. The soldier will be forever in our hearts.

As I said this morning, we must not be silenced. Today's events must strengthen our resolve to remain strong and united in the face of those who would use violence to undermine democracy and to weaken our society. We cannot be intimidated by those who would seek to spread fear and mistrust. We will not give up on our belief in a fair, democratic society for all people. As Ontarians, this is a time when we must come together, find the strength in each other to support each other and to make sure that we provide to each other the safety that we know is possible.

I want to thank everyone who has provided that security up until this point and will do so going forward. As I say, I express my sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the soldier who was victimized today.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I thank the Premier and, later, the leader of the third party for their words.

We know that the soldier shot in Ottawa today during today's senseless and despicable violence has lost his life. We won't know his name until the next of kin are informed, but I know we all want to pay our respects. He died on duty while standing guard at the National War Memorial, a symbol of the price paid in lives for our freedom and our democracy.

Our hearts—all of us—go out to his family and friends, who surely took pride in his service as a reservist from Hamilton, in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. Today's events are shocking and sad for all of us, but certainly infinitely more for those who personally knew and loved the man who died. There are no words that can offer comfort, but we will honour his memory today and beyond. The democracy he represented and the service of our armed forces will always be upheld. We will not allow violence to undermine or silence it.

The unpredictable dangers for those who generously serve as our country's protectors, whether at home or abroad, must never be forgotten. Few of us expect our lives to be at risk when we wake up in the morning and prepare for our day. The danger for our armed-forces personnel begins the moment they don the uniform of public protection and service, in a true act of bravery.

We will never forget the sacrifice and tragedy of this soldier's death, and will remain ever-vigilant and resolute in the protection of our democracy. Our hearts and our prayers also go out to those who are injured, and we thank all those brave people who did respond and are working now to keep us safe right across Ontario and the country.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The New Democrats, of course, are also shocked and saddened by the tragic events of this morning in Ottawa. Our hearts go out to the family of the soldier from a regiment at the armouries in my riding, on James Street North in the city of Hamilton: the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Certainly our hearts go out, as well, to all of the colleagues, the brothers and sisters, that that soldier served with in his reserve regiment. The commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Hatfield, I'm sure, is having a difficult time today, as well as the others who use those armouries—that historic building in our community—for the reserve work that is done there.

I have to say that the closeness of this situation to myself and my community was something that I wasn't aware of when we gave our initial remarks this morning. Having said that, the nature of a situation like this touches everyone, not the least of which is everyone in this House, and I know that many of us have friends and relatives and, frankly, staff who work on Parliament Hill day in and day out. Many of you have family who are in the area of where this incident took place today. I think the occurrence today reminds us all that we are all one big family of Canadians who need to stand together, who need to reject this kind of violence and this kind of activity and who need to say that as we look towards the



future, we remember that we all have to have each other's back. It's something that I used to tell my son as he was growing up: "You have to have your own back, but make sure you have the back of your friends as well."

I think that today we need to remind ourselves, as we look to the people who responded on the front lines to what occurred and what was unfolding and continues to be a crisis, frankly, in our nation's capital, that we have to remain grateful for the bravery and the dedication of those first responders and our military personnel who are protecting our fellow citizens today and who do so every single day.

Today is definitely a day for Canadians in every province, regardless of political stripe, to stand in solidarity to reaffirm that our democratic institutions will never, ever waver in the face of threat. Whether it's the kind of threat that happened today or the kind of threat that may happen at any time in the future, we don't know, but I think it's our responsibility and our duty and our pride as Canadians to stand together against this kind of threat and to remain ever thoughtful of the people who give their lives when these kinds of occurrences take place.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the three leaders for speaking on behalf of your caucuses to bring greetings and your heartfelt communication with the families. Your response today has been exemplary, and I'm proud to stand in front of you today for the work that you do, and I want to thank again the Sergeant-at-Arms for his work and his vigilance for us here in the Legislature.

As we always do, I will ensure that a copy of the DVD and the Hansard copy is sent to the family, once identified properly. I thank all of you again.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ROAD SAFETY

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Mr. Speaker, for the past 13 years, Ontario's roads have consistently ranked either first or second in road safety in North America. We are, here in this province, a recognized world-class leader in road safety because of our tough laws, our strong enforcement and the dedicated work of so many of our valuable road safety partners. Keeping our roads safe for everyone—for drivers, passengers, cyclists and pedestrians—is a top priority for this government.

However, despite Ontario's record of success, there is still more that our province can do to improve its road safety programs. Yesterday, I was very proud to introduce new legislation entitled Making Ontario's Roads Safer that, if passed, would keep Ontario as a leader in road safety. If passed, this legislation would reduce collisions and injuries across Ontario and assist municipalities with the collection of unpaid Provincial

Offences Act fines, all while improving the safety of road users. It would be one more step with respect to giving Ontarians healthier, more convenient and safer choices regarding how they choose to get around.

This legislation, if passed, improves measures to address drivers who repeatedly drink and drive by requiring them to complete intensive alcohol education, treatment and monitoring programs. It also proposes applying alcohol-impaired sanctions to drivers who are drug-impaired, because recent statistics demonstrate that far too many drivers are endangering themselves and others on our roads with drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their systems. This legislation, if passed, also includes tougher penalties for alcohol-impaired driving, such as longer licence suspensions, immediate vehicle impoundments, requirements for ignition interlock, and escalating sanctions for drivers with a blood alcohol content in the warn range.

### 1530

Although recent statistics show that Ontario's fatality rate of licensed drivers is the lowest ever recorded, on average a person is killed on our roads every 18 hours. That is one more important reason that we're going to target those drivers who still aren't getting the message and continue to use their cellphones while behind the wheel. We're proposing fine range increases, from \$60 to \$500 up to \$300 to \$1,000 and, going forward, we plan to introduce three demerit points upon conviction and add distracted driving prohibitions to the graduated licensing system.

This government took action on distracted driving in 2009 by banning the use of handheld devices, and we're going to continue to take action today and in the future. The evidence speaks for itself. A driver who uses a cellphone is four times more likely to be involved in a crash. Make no mistake: Safe driving requires undivided attention.

Public education will be a large part of our work going forward. We will continue to work with our valuable road safety partners to make sure that distracted drivers get the message: Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.

The legislation also looks at what we can do to improve pedestrian safety. Although the good news is that the number of pedestrians killed has declined significantly over the last 25 years, pedestrians still represent about one in five of all motor-vehicle-related fatalities in Ontario; 46% of those fatalities occurred at intersections.

In response to the coroner's office recommendations and municipal requests, this legislation, if passed, would require drivers to yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers. It would also support the use of new pedestrian crossing devices.

We know that there are other choices people need to make in order to get around, and healthy choices such as cycling, walking and active transportation are all part and parcel of a range of solutions that will help address congestion and improve our air quality. If passed, this legislation would build on #CycleON, Ontario's 20-year

strategy to become the safest, most cycling-friendly jurisdiction in North America. It would increase fines and demerit points for motorists dooring cyclists, and where practical it would require motorists to keep a distance of at least one metre between their vehicles and cyclists when passing. It would also support cycling on paved shoulders of unrestricted provincial highways and in contraflow bicycle lanes in urban centres to give cyclists more choices with respect to how and where to travel.

In addition, if passed, this legislation would update our mandatory medical reporting program. Future regulations could allow us to accept recommendations from a broader range of health care practitioners, a measure which responds to requests from the medical community about our mandatory medical reporting program.

This legislation would also respond to municipal requests for assistance with respect to collecting unpaid Provincial Offences Act fines. We would put yet another tool in place to help fine collection and help keep our municipal roads safe.

These changes and numerous others we're proposing recognize that everyone, from the most vulnerable to the most seasoned, needs to feel safe and protected on our roads and highways. On that note, I'd like to recognize that this week is also School Bus Safety Week here in Ontario. We join the Ontario School Bus Association in reminding everyone to be alert, slow down and obey the rules of the road around school buses and in school crossing zones.

It's also national teen safe driving week. Led by Parachute Canada, one of our dedicated road safety partners, teen safe driving week is a good time to talk to teenagers and young adults about distracted driving, impaired driving and why making safe driving choices can literally make or break their future.

Unsafe drivers and vehicles have no place on Ontario's roads. The people of our province deserve no less. We are a North American leader in road safety, and we are committed to keeping it that way. I urge all members on all sides of this House to support this legislation.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Hon. David Oraziatti:** I'm here today to comment on our government's strong track record of protecting Ontario consumers and to discuss our plan to ensure Ontario consumers enjoy the benefits of a safe and fair marketplace.

Since 2003, our government has introduced legislation, updated existing legislation, and worked with consumers to ensure that they know their rights. Our ministry's priority is educating consumers so that they can make smart decisions and ensure that they are able to protect themselves against scams, fraud and predatory practices.

The Consumer Protection Act is our ministry's hallmark piece of legislation. It governs consumer transactions and protects Ontarians in their day-to-day lives. The Consumer Protection Act allows Ontarians the

certainty of clearer contracts, various protection tools, and offers remedies for a consumer if a business makes a false, misleading or inappropriate transaction.

In 2013, our Consumer Protection Branch continued to take steps to ensure that consumers are protected across the province, arranging for nearly \$500,000 in refunds and cancelled contracts and to help reclaim over a million dollars in fines and legal settlements for Ontarians.

Another important initiative I'm sure you are all aware of, and our government is pleased with, is our progress on the Wireless Services Agreement Act. This has been a huge step forward for consumers in this province. I was proud to first introduce this bill in 2010, and today wireless providers are required to draft contracts which clearly lay out the services and fees for consumers who, in turn, now have a better understanding of their rights when renewing their existing contracts, or cancelling them.

Our Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2013, is another piece of legislation that our government is pleased to proceed with. The bill targets three very important areas of consumer protection. First, it helps to curb aggressive door-to-door sales tactics, especially for the sale of water heaters. It protects vulnerable, indebted consumers against the misleading and abusive practices of some companies offering debt settlement services. Thirdly, it strengthens the integrity of real estate bidding practices and allows consumers more power to negotiate flexible, lower-cost arrangements when using a real estate professional.

We're pleased with the progress our government has made since 2003; however, we certainly recognize that more needs to be done. When I was appointed Minister of Government and Consumer Services, I was excited about the opportunities to serve in this role, and as minister I will continue our government's work to provide even greater protection for the people of Ontario. My ministry's mandate letter lays out the framework for these priorities. The priorities are the next logical steps to our already strong record, picking up where my predecessors left off.

We're committed to two key overarching priorities over the next four years: First, strengthening consumer services and, second, building a dynamic business climate. At the forefront of this is the need for expanding the protection for condominium buyers and owners through modernizing the Condominium Act.

We recognize how important these updates are, and how diverse the needs of condominium owners and buyers are. We need to continue to strengthen consumer marketplace fairness and transparency regulations, specifically in the areas of home renovations, moving companies, and home inspector qualifications, as well as examining the issue of online consumer protection so we can move in that direction as well.

We'll be exploring opportunities to strengthen consumer protection measures by working together across ministries to ensure that all Ontarians are protected, especially those who are most vulnerable. As set out in our platform, we are excited to begin working on the con-



sumer bill of rights. We'll be undertaking consultations around the creation of this.

And finally, we're continuing to build up our strong brand of identity for Consumer Protection Ontario to ensure Ontarians know where they can go for trusted information and advice on important consumer issues.

Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues here in the House today for listening as I update Ontarians on consumer protection measures. I'm proud of our government's record and I'm excited to move forward on these priorities. Thank you.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It's been quite a week for driver safety, and it's great to see such a focus on awareness as we celebrate both School Bus Safety Week and Teen Driver Safety Week. Of course, we'll be reviewing a bill to prevent distracted driving as well.

I want to take a first opportunity to ask my colleagues to join me in showing support for our professional school bus drivers across the province today in recognition of School Bus Driver Appreciation Day.

Across Ontario we have about 18,000 school buses travelling 2 million kilometres every school day, providing 300 million safe rides during the year—300 million. That's no easy task, but we can all make it a little easier by remaining aware of the unique safety challenges when approaching school buses. We can all learn to benefit from the simple one, two, threes of school bus rules:

(1) Never pass a school bus when it's stopped with its lights flashing.

(2) Be extra vigilant around school hours.

(3) And of course, be courteous to school buses, giving them room and letting them change lanes when they need to.

1540

At the same time, we also recognize and lend our support to those promoting National Teen Driver Safety Week, to raise awareness and seek solutions to the unnecessary, preventable and always tragic teen deaths that often occur in our province.

It's a sad fact that while young people only make up 13% of drivers, they account for one quarter of all road-related injuries and fatalities. We all know that many of these injuries and deaths can be prevented, and we recognize the work of groups like Parachute Canada to raise awareness of the problems and seek shared solutions.

I do want to be clear, Speaker, that given the impacts of distracted and impaired driving, it is essential that we take significant steps toward better education and tougher penalties to ensure drivers are focusing on the road. We all know, and many have first-hand experience in the past, of course, with the number of distractions faced by the modern driver. We all know the impacts distracted driving can cause. That's why it's the government's responsibility and our responsibility as legislators to ensure our laws reflect the startling realities we see on our roads.

I support many of the principles that are at the heart of this act. I look forward to the debate to ensure the concerns we have are addressed for this positive and timely piece of legislation protecting the safety of all Ontarians on our roads.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** I'm pleased to stand here and comment on the statements by the Minister of Transportation. For all those who help make our teens safer drivers and keep the children and drivers of the school buses themselves safe, thank you very much.

I have an 11-year-old who is already speaking about her first car and a four-year-old who, when I have the opportunity to drop her off at her bus stop, instinctively steps back 10 feet. So there's some great, great work that's being done in the province by many dedicated people.

In terms of the Making Ontario's Roads Safer legislation, I was briefed on that legislation yesterday by MTO staff, as were others, and I've read through the documentation.

When we take a look at distracted driving, it's definitely something that we need to deal with. The statistics speak for themselves. I look forward to debating how we can make those rules stricter.

When we talk about drugged driving, like drinking and driving, it's unthinkable. We need to hammer home the idea that drugged driving is just as bad and unacceptable in Ontario.

Cycling: I come from a community where active transportation is a big topic, so any way we can make cycling safer beyond what might be proposed, I think, is something that would be worthy of debate.

I look forward to putting in place stricter regulations in terms of cycling safety and pedestrian safety likewise. Too many times, we see pedestrians getting hit and at times people not even sticking around after the accident, so I look forward to looking at that portion of the proposed legislation as well—the proposed legislation as well as regulatory changes that will have to come in place.

Coming from a city council background—and I've been speaking about the lack of revenue for municipalities—the idea of being able to collect from unpaid fines is a huge movement forward, and I look forward to discussing that.

Two areas that I will be bringing up and I did bring up with staff are when we talk about trucking—extending the length of trucks proposes a whole new set of dilemmas in residential roads. That's an area of concern of my residents, and I know I will be discussing that, as well as the need to look at the coroner's report more specifically in terms of the need to understand the “complete streets” philosophy—is something that we in the province should be promoting.

I look forward to bringing forward ideas when the debate comes to this House.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll come back in the rotation to the member from Perth–Wellington on his response to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in response to the government's consumer protection update. I certainly agree with the government that it is important to raise awareness on consumer protection to the extent that we can do so.

Speaker, since I was elected in July and received this critic role for government and consumer services, we have contacted the minister's office to try to set up meetings so we can voice our concerns as to what we feel are important issues, not only in my riding of Perth–Wellington but certainly throughout the province. Unfortunately, we haven't had that meeting yet. I wish we could have had that done before today, because we have some really important things I would like to express to the minister.

However, like many, I've seen the commercials and ads that the government has run informing consumers of their rights. We've heard concerns regarding collection agencies, water heater rentals and home renovations, to name just a few. While I'm happy to hear the government say it will take additional steps to protect consumers, I am concerned that the minister's update did not address much of the feedback I have been hearing, certainly in my riding. This is a government that has been in power for 11 years, and in that time, it has often been focused more on harassing businesses than on protecting consumers.

Too often I get the comment from businesses in my riding, "I wish the government would get out of my way," because of over-regulation. For instance, today's announcement does nothing to help businesses affected by TSSA red tape. The Downie Street Bake House located in Stratford in my riding of Perth–Wellington is one example. They invested good money in high-quality used ovens, but then the TSSA came along. They made a host of unreasonable demands to get the ovens certified for use. My constituents had no choice but to go \$20,000 more in debt to buy new lower-grade ovens.

Since I have been the critic, I've also received numerous emails regarding the Taron Warranty Corp. and the issues consumers have had with warranties on their new homes. It is my hope that the minister will take further action to address those having difficulties with the TSSA, Taron and many other government agencies.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** While I want to acknowledge that the government is taking a good step in coming forward with a consumer bill of rights, the problem is that in a number of areas where it comes to consumer protection, the government has been far too slow in acting. In particular, I want to spend some of my time

addressing some of the concerns raised by a colleague as well, regarding Taron.

Taron is an extremely serious situation. It's been brewing for a number of years. There are so many constituents not just in my riding, but across the entire province continually talking about the fact that no matter what they try to do, no matter how many efforts they take, they simply cannot get the coverage they're entitled to.

They've tried to reach out to the ministry. They've tried to reach out to the government. There's only one option when it comes to a new home in Ontario, and it's Taron. The government has essentially created a one-warranty system—a monopoly on the system. The government has a responsibility to ensure that this one warranty provider is providing a good service. The government has a responsibility to ensure that the one mandated warranty system actually serves the interests of the people of Ontario, not the builders and not the developers.

This is a serious concern. Constituents have come to me with complaints regarding shoddy workmanship in a brand new home that took numerous efforts to rectify, and still, nothing was done. When they went to Taron, Taron tried everything possible to deny the claim. It seems that Taron is more in the business of denying warranty claims than in actually addressing warranty concerns.

One of the other areas that has been raised by a number of my constituents—and I hope the government will take action on this. While the consumer bill of rights is a great idea, one of the proposals that the NDP has pushed forward a number of times is a consumer rights ombudsman: a direct, independent body that consumers can go to to address concerns around consumer rights whenever there are violations of those rights. I encourage the government to consider our proposal of having an ombudsman for consumer rights.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Oshawa is standing, I believe, on a point of order.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am. Thank you, Speaker. I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to introduce some of our guests joining us today. In our gallery, we have Randy Henning, Colin Goodwin, Jamie Bramma and Tim Morrison, who are joining us from the Durham Regional Police Association. We're of course pleased to have them there in the House today.

1550

## PETITIONS

## AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:



"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

"Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions is the result of factors other than Drive Clean, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

"Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

"Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false 'fails,' which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment takes immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to the petition and send it to the table with page Josée. Thank you.

#### FAMILY DAY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a family day holiday in every month of the year would allow us all to spend more time with our family and friends and strengthen our relationships with those around us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislature instates a family day holiday in each month of the year in addition to the already existing holidays."

I'm going to give this to Rachel to deliver to the table.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition. I will give my petition to page Félix.

#### FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further petitions? The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you again this session.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and families are not properly supported in southwestern Ontario;

"Whereas the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services need to develop a comprehensive care strategy that appoints a lead ministry with the responsibility for coordinating FASD management and prevention efforts;

"Whereas the provincial government needs to reallocate funding to increase FASD diagnostic and treatment capacity in Ontario, increase community and educational supports and increase prevention efforts across the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario take a cross-ministerial approach in developing a comprehensive care strategy that supports and promotes best practices in FASD management and prevention and provides appropriate supports for individuals with FASD so that they may access the necessary services."

I support this petition and sign my signature to it.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer's disease is progressive, worsens over time and will eventually lead to death;

"Whereas there is an estimated 208,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease creates emotional, social and economic burdens on the family and supports of those suffering with the disease—over 25% of those

providing personal supports to survivors of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia are seniors;

"Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020; and

"Whereas Ontario's strategy for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia has not been revised since the implementation of a five-year strategy in 1999;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately review, revise and implement an updated, research-informed, comprehensive strategy to respond to and prepare for the rapidly growing needs of those living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to page Colston to take to the table.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

"Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport."

I agree with this petition, and I will affix any signature to this and give it to page Jamie.

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada approved Esbriet in October 2012 for individuals with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis," known as IPF, and there were people here visiting with us yesterday;

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has declined to list Esbriet on the Ontario drug benefit formulary or reimburse patients through the Exceptional Access Program;

"Whereas Esbriet is the first of its kind to be approved in Canada for the treatment of IPF and will slow the progression of this fatal disease;

"Whereas the high cost of Esbriet is creating financial hardships for many individuals and their families. Only those patients who have access to a private drug plan can

afford the cost of this medication, forcing some patients to go without treatment;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To review and reconsider the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's decision to decline any assistance with Esbriet and consider some form of assistance with the cost of this medication in order to improve the lives of Ontarians with IPF and decrease the cost on the health care system associated with this disease."

I agree with furthering this, I affix my signature, and I'll send it to the desk with Callum.

### MISSING PERSONS

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I have a petition from people across the province.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

"Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

"Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

"Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

"Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause."

I wholeheartedly support this petition, affix my name to it and send it with Gregory.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** This is a petition that celebrates Hispanic heritage in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

**1600**

"Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of



Hispanic peoples to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport."

I enthusiastically say, "Si, Señor," to this and sign it with mucho gusto.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further petitions? The member for Stormont–Dundas–Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's in there. Thank you, Speaker.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas quality care for the 77,000 residents of long-term-care (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

"Whereas over the last 10 years 50% of Ontario's hospital-based complex continuing care beds have been closed by the provincial government despite a 29.7% increase in the acuity level of LTC residents and a 73% increase of LTC residents in Ontario who suffer from some form of Alzheimer's or dementia; and

"Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes keeps pace with residents with the growing number of residents with complex behaviours, such as dementia and Alzheimer's; and

"Whereas for over a decade several Ontario coroner's inquests into nursing home deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and increase in staffing levels; and

"Whereas the Ontario Liberal government first promised a legislated care standard for residents in the province's LTC in 2003, but to date have failed to make good on their promise; and

"Whereas the LTC Homes Act 2007 empowered the provincial government to create a minimum standard, but fell short of actually creating one; and

"Whereas the most detailed and reputable study of minimum care standards recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) To amend the LTC Homes Act 2007 to increase the minimum care standard as recommended in recent studies, adjusted for acuity level and case mix;

"(2) To ensure accountability by making public reporting of staffing levels at Ontario LTC homes mandatory;

"(3) To immediately provide funding for specialized facilities for persons with cognitive impairment who have been assessed as potentially aggressive, and staff them with a sufficient number of appropriately trained workers."

I agree with this and will be passing it to Ben.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. That was the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. My apologies for doctoring up your riding.

#### AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I can't believe it's been seven months and I still keep getting these petitions.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the University of Guelph's Kemptville and Alfred campuses are two of Ontario's outstanding post-secondary agricultural schools; and

"Whereas these campuses have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students from agricultural communities across eastern Ontario and the future success of the region's agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership; and

"Whereas regional campuses like those in Kemptville and Alfred ensure the agri-food industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Wynne in her dual capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food act immediately to reverse the University of Guelph's short-sighted and unacceptable decision to close its Kemptville and Alfred campuses."

I'm pleased to affix my signature and send it to the table with page Josée.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further petitions? The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** You know, practice works. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas repeated cuts to health care funding under the present government are having a negative impact on the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, including seniors, diabetics and those suffering from eye and cardiovascular conditions; and

"Whereas the heart rehabilitation program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre provided a valuable service for many residents; and

"Whereas it is in everyone's interests to help all Ontarians stay healthy and prevent the occurrence of acute and dangerous conditions, such as heart failure; and

"Whereas this interest is best served through adequate funding to programs that have proven their value;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take all necessary action to restore the heart rehab program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Jamie.

## VISITORS

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** I would like to take this opportunity to welcome four police officers from the Durham Regional Police Association. I do recognize that they've already left, but I met with them earlier: Randy Henning, Tim Morrison, Colin Goodwin and Jamie Bramma. Welcome.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

FIGHTING FRAUD  
AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE  
INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE  
LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION  
DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 21, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to defer the lead for our party for Bill 15.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member seeks unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks, Speaker, very much. I'm glad to stand up and speak to Bill 15, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014. It's not the first time in this House that I've had to get up and speak regarding automobile insurance, and I'm pretty sure it won't be the last time as we go forward. Before I start, though, I'd like to go over an overview of the history of auto insurance in the province of Ontario, just to refresh the memories of those who are listening with regard to how we got to where we are today.

In 1914, auto insurance was added to the Insurance Act, but at that time it was not compulsory.

In 1932, minimum third party liability limits were introduced. Anyone who bought insurance had to buy minimum coverage to protect them if they got sued. This was actually the first version of compulsory coverage.

We go up to 1972, and all policies are to have no-fault benefits for loss of income, medical and rehabilitation expenses not covered by OHIP. This was the first case of no-fault insurance.

In 1980, auto insurance becomes compulsory for all vehicle owners in Ontario; now, in a sense, it has become a tax to the people of Ontario because they are now forced to purchase auto insurance.

In 1985, a crisis of auto insurance availability and affordability occurs due to rising bodily injury claims.

In 1988, Bill 2 came around to create the Automobile Insurance Board, with a mandate to conduct hearings on auto rates.

In 1990, Bill 68, brought up by the Liberal government, enriches the no-fault benefits.

In 1991, the NDP abandoned plans to make auto insurance public, realizing that it's not justifiable in this province.

In 1994, Bill 164 was introduced, which includes additional no-fault benefits, making the product richer and richer.

In 1996, the PC government introduced legislation to try to simplify the product, making the system less costly.

In 2003, this Liberal government introduced a freeze of rates because big industry losses were about to cause big increases in our premiums. It was the first time that this Liberal government decided to meddle in private industry.

In 2004, a white paper was released, saying that people with employment insurance should be able to opt out of some mandatory coverage, and therefore they're not covered twice. Unfortunately, this went nowhere, and it's due to the inaction of this government.

Could you imagine, Speaker, that if your own work insurance covered you for certain coverage for when you got injured in an automobile accident, you would no longer have to pay that premium on your auto insurance bill, and how much money could be saved throughout this province for people who have two types of insurance? I think maybe the government should dust off that white paper and revisit it again as we're moving forward with reforming the auto insurance product throughout the province.

1610

In 2010, this government introduced major reforms that reduced coverage and resulted in high levels of mediation and arbitration as a result of people not satisfied with getting the services they need after an automobile accident. The end result of all these years of changes to the automobile product is a costly, complex system that has bureaucracy on top of bureaucracy on top of bureaucracy, and regulation upon regulation upon regulation, which brought us up to last year, when the government brought forward Bill 171 just before the election. They tried to fast-track it through the Legislature in order to have something that they could hold up to the people of this province in the upcoming election.

Here we are today with Bill 15, which has now been reintroduced. The government has brought that forward in order to deal with their promise of a 15% cut in insurance rates throughout the province. This promise they made, of a 15% decrease, allowed them to stay in power one extra year because it bought the support of the



NDP to prop up this government for an extra year of Liberal governance.

We've said a long time, in our rebuttal of that 15% cut promise, that a unilateral cut to insurance rates without cost savings in the industry would lead to unintended and negative consequences. We've seen this evidence on a few fronts. The availability of insurance has decreased in this province. State Farm sold its entire property and casualty business in Canada. They cited the Ontario auto insurance market as a key reason for this. This is a bad trend, as New Jersey promised to cut rates by 15% in 1998. Numerous companies left the market at that time, making auto insurance very difficult to obtain. While rates did come down by 15% over two years, the lack of availability led to a 27% spike in premiums in 2000.

Further, we're starting to hear from various constituency offices that people with a few blemishes on their record are being dropped by their insurance carriers. Insurers cannot drop a client during their policy, but they can refuse to renew a policy. I've had a few constituents in my office who have noted that since this government has mandated the 15% cut, their house insurance policies seem to have been creeping up. It's something that we warned against when the government came forward with this 15% cut; however, they wanted to stay in power an extra year and went forth with that promise.

Any move that required all companies to cut rates I think would be a dangerous move. I'm quoting Philip Howell right now. Phil Howell is the CEO of FSCO, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario. They are the regulators of the product throughout the province, under the direction of the Ministry of Finance. In the Standing Committee on General Government on April 15, 2013, Phil Howell stepped forward to make this comment, and I quote Phil: "So any move that required all companies to cut rates I think would be very dangerous right now. As well as that, I think you would find situations where people would just have less access to insurance and perhaps be forced into the Facility Association, paying much higher rates than they currently are." That was Phil Howell.

For those that are listening at home, and here, who don't know what the Facility Association is, the Facility Association is basically where you go when no one in this province will insure you. You'll note that when there are problems in the availability of insurance product, the usage of the Facility Association grows and grows. The problem with the Facility Association having to insure people is the fact that this product—auto insurance—is not going to be fully accessible to people throughout the province.

The second item that I'm seeing evidence of is that bad drivers are getting bigger discounts. We mentioned that also to this government when they decided to enforce a 15% reduction in auto insurance rates; that, in fact, in order to get that average drop of 15%, those paying higher premiums might see a higher decrease in their premiums in order to balance out those that are paying the lower premiums to start with. So what you're seeing

here—from filings in January 2014, the biggest winners were those insured by non-standard insurers. Non-standard insurers are those that will insure the worst drivers on the road—those with multiple accidents or those with drinking and driving convictions; basically, the people who are one step away from having to go to the Facility Association.

Just to review what they gave out, the non-standard companies and their respective rate reductions were as follows: Perth Insurance Co. gave a 15% reduction, Pafco Insurance Co. gave a 14.5% reduction and Echelon General Insurance Co. gave an 8.7% reduction. Those at home might say that's great, but remember, these are the insurance decreases for those who are drunk drivers in our province, those who can cause multiple accidents. So in essence, this 15% rate reduction brought forward by the government, supported by the NDP, has in fact been giving better discounts to the poor drivers of this province, where those who follow the rules and pay their premiums every year are not achieving the same rate discounts throughout this province.

I'd also like to make note of a comparison of Bill 171 to Bill 15, and the fact that this government has gone from one end of the spectrum to the other end of the spectrum. In order to fight fraud from the fraud task force report, which was delivered over two years ago with over 38 recommendations, of which this government has implemented maybe four or five, they're now coming out with Bill 171: "We're going to regulate health care clinics throughout this province." We agreed with regulating health care clinics, but we did not agree on how to regulate the health care clinics. They wanted to create this whole new bureaucracy at FSCO, where FSCO would have to double their bureaucracy in order to regulate these health care clinics throughout the province.

Our way was a much simpler method: using the health colleges throughout the province that are here to regulate the health care clinics, much like pharmacy is regulated throughout the province. The Ontario College of Pharmacists has a contact at the pharmacy, which is a designated manager, and they assume all responsibilities, legal and otherwise, to ensure that the pharmacy is following the rules. If there is a problem and they are not following the rules, and that designated manager is aware of that, they will lose their health care licence—the pharmacist loses their licence.

We could do the same thing with health care clinics throughout this province. They would have to have a designated health care professional running the clinic and taking care of the legal aspects of the business. If the clinic wants to be fraudulent in any sort of way, that designated manager would lose their licence if they were in on the act. This, I believe, would really take up the fraud part of health care clinics, end that practice, and at the same time be a minimal cost to the businesses and the health care and insurance industries throughout the province.

However, I was really shocked when I picked up Bill 15 thinking that maybe this government, last year in

committee, listened to my idea about having designated managers run the health care clinics in order to reduce fraud. I was kind of hoping they'd listen to it, but they've gone to the other end of the spectrum. It's not even in Bill 15. For some reason, one of the fraud report's recommendations disappeared. I guess it's not that important anymore for this government to really look at fraud. I think they're putting some window dressing on it, but for some reason, they don't care about going after this aspect of fraud, which is pretty rampant in the GTA and Toronto area with these health care clinics. I don't know what went wrong with their abilities to want to really fight fraud, to really deal with the issue of auto insurance, to really look at lowering costs in the system in order to reduce the rates, but apparently, I guess they feel that they don't really have to go down that road in order to achieve the results.

Further to that, the government has introduced other aspects into Bill 15 which are part of the fraud task force report. We'd like to look at that in committee as this bill gets going farther down the road to ensure that this government, with a history of building bureaucracy and cost to systems, doesn't necessarily do that going forward with the auto insurance product. I think the bureaucracy and costs, not only in the insurance industry but—all that cost gets trickled down to us policyholders, those who are paying the bills, to ensure that we can have the safety of being supported in case of an automobile accident. We want to make sure, through Bill 15, that they don't take the opportunity to create new fiefdoms and new czars of auto insurance in order to mandate a 15% cut which, two or three years down the road, when prices spike because they had done nothing, really, for the cost in the auto insurance product and people aren't able to get access to the product—that we aren't going to be back here debating it again.

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When we discuss this in committee, we're going to be making sure that each and every part of this bill lays out the least bureaucratic, least costly way to reduce the cost of the auto insurance product.

Our party put forth some recommendations early last year to ensure that we could actually deal with auto insurance rates throughout this province, to ensure that there's competition back in the market. Some people say, "What do you mean, there's no competition? It's an open market." Unfortunately, there is so much regulation, which I mentioned earlier, that the actual chances of two companies competing against one another in order to lower their rates, much like any businesses across the province will compete in order to attract business—they're pretty much deterred from doing so.

We can just basically look at how to get your rate changed in this province. Right now, the auto insurance companies have to fill out a report, hire their mathematicians and justify any rate increase or decrease, which is thousands of pages long. It takes months to compile this request to lower or raise your rates. They submit it to FSCO, and FSCO does their own calculations, gets their

own mathematicians, and if there are any missing notes in this 1,000-page document, if there's anything out of the ordinary, it gets shipped back to the insurance company to fix up, which might add another month or two. Then you have it come back to FSCO, and after a couple of months of their having this document, they can say, "You can lower or raise your rates the next time the person files for return," which usually happens on a monthly basis, depending on when your year is up.

In a marketplace, in general terms—I'll use Walmart again—if Walmart has all of a sudden got a shipment in, a product of widgets, that in fact lowered their cost, which would allow them to cut their sale price down in order to outcompete The Bay, for instance, they would do that within the day. I'm sure they have the computer system set up so that automatically, when head office gets that money, it filters through and the price comes down. You see it in their commercials, the happy face and the prices coming down.

The insurance industry would like to do the same, because they would garner more people to buy their product if they were able to compete on price. No matter who, whether it be Aviva or what have you, the fact of the matter is that they can't do it. In essence, they could offer a lower price to a consumer. However, for them to initiate that price change to go down, you're looking at over a year before they can actually implement that change, and then you'd have to wait for that person to renew their policy.

The same instance that's a problem with that is, if something happens in the industry—say, accident increases go through the roof and now the insurance industry is looking at a loss and they'd like to raise their prices after giving the discount—again, that would take over a year, and most businesses would be hard-pressed to survive the fact that they can't raise their rates in the short term in order to stay in business or come out even. Otherwise, you can just imagine everyone's rates skyrocketing with the fact that they would have to wait over a year to do so.

To make this story short, Mr. Speaker, we had proposed a file-and-use system which, provided that the insurance company is lowering or raising their rates between a set percentage—and this is ideal for FSCO the regulator to do. FSCO can decide what is an acceptable percentage to raise or lower your rates. If the insurance companies in fact are allowed to do so, then why not, like other jurisdictions around this world, allow them to lower their rates, file them: "We are lowering our rates to this amount," or, "We're raising our rates this amount. We're in that parameter"? FSCO goes, "Okay, it's done." They can now offer incentives for people who drive better. They can bring in the technology which is slowly coming into the marketplace, those little devices that will track how you drive your car. The best way to use one of those devices is to have the file-and-use system where you can change the rates monthly or biweekly, on how well they're driving. It will improve driving.

A file-and-use system will allow them to compete with each other. If Walmart wants to get into insurance, if they



want to sell insurance, they could be the low-cost provider and lower their rates whenever they feel like it in order to compete against the other insurance companies. I can tell you that competition in the marketplace will definitely increase the product availability for people and ensure that people have the coverage they need.

The auto insurance product is broken. They're trying to deal with it also through mediation-arbitration. The Auditor General noted a few years ago that the backlog was months upon months upon months, compared to the 60 days in which it had to be dealt with. You look at the changes they made in 2010, which probably caused the increase in arbitration-mediation. We would like to see private mediators brought in to help deal with mediation so that it would be fast-tracked through. They're obviously not coming forward with that.

We'd also like to see changes in the product where you would have peer-to-peer review. So you hurt your back in a car accident, you go to a chiropractor, and the chiropractor says, "You need this and this treatment"; it goes to the insurance adjuster and they look at it and go, "Well, I'll let this neurosurgeon take a look at it," and of course most likely he'd deny it or find some other reason, so there's a fight starting there. We'd like to see, if you use a chiropractor to get service, that you go to your insurance adjuster and actually they will use a chiropractor so you have peer-to-peer review. We think that would actually lower the amount of objections to people, and fighting, going to mediation and arbitration.

My time is almost up. I appreciate the House allowing us to defer our lead. I am happy to open up the discussion for this party. I look forward, in committee, to having further discussions. These are just a few points off the top of my head that I thought I'd bring out, and hopefully we can expand upon them. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I support any attempt to fight fraud and lower auto insurance, but Bill 15 has some major errors.

First, it separates the process by which victims can seek redress. Bill 15 takes away the victim's right to turn to the courts against insurance companies who refuse to pay. Without Bill 15, a victim has the right to either go to court or an arbitration tribunal. Now they'll be forced to use the tribunal. This means that if they prove the insurance company owes them money, it will be harder to get their legal fees covered. It also means that if it's proven that someone else is at fault for the accident, the victim will have to go to court against whoever injured them and then go to a tribunal to get the money from the insurance company. Instead of doing this at the same time, it will require two different procedures—very costly.

Oftentimes these victims are seriously injured. This system would mean more lawyers, more court fees and less accessibility to justice for the victims of accidents here in Ontario.

The other major problem is the interest issue. As it stands now, if a victim is owed pain and suffering and an

insurance company refuses to pay, the company is charged 5%. The bill would lower that rate to 1.3%. That means less money for the victim of the accident and it means insurance companies are less pressured, which is important, to pay what they owe.

Fighting fraud and high insurance rates is a good thing, but this bill stands to give big companies a break and further hurt victims of car accidents.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I just want to take a couple of minutes to make some comments to the words that the member from Elgin—Middlesex—London put before us this afternoon. Instead of focusing on his 20-minute comments, I just want to highlight a couple of things.

First, auto insurance is one of those things where, you know, we have destiny in our own hands. I mean, driving records, where we drive, how we drive and what type of vehicle we drive all play a big role.

I will admit that some few years back, not too long ago, I can say I was one of those unfortunate folks that seemed to encounter the law maybe more than once or twice. My insurance premium did go up substantially. And you know what? I wasn't there to complain, because I created that scenario where, frankly, the insurance company didn't appreciate my driving record.

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So I've made a concerted effort since then. We drive—at least I do, as an MPP—some 3,000 to 5,000 kilometres a month, so it's not hard sometimes to have a bit of a heavy foot. But let me say this: I more religiously use speed control. I set a speed and I try to stick to that speed. My insurance has gone down. It's gone down dramatically in the last two or three years because, obviously, my record could match it.

Bill 15 is a good bill to initiate some of those things, but I think, at the end of the day, we really have a huge part in what our insurance premiums will be like.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's a privilege to get up and to comment on the wise words that came from our member from Elgin—Middlesex—London—wise words.

All things aside, when we look at this bill, we've had numerous studies come out that talked about some of the real issues, and for the most part, many of these issues were ignored. Fraud is highlighted as the biggest issue, especially around the GTA, where insurance rates are the highest, and we lack the ability to really get at that. Studies have shown that, and yet it's just something that—really, all directions were pointing towards taking action finally, and we haven't seen that. We look at the health clinics, different avenues that have been used to really jack up the cost—not attacked in this bill. That's unfortunate, because I think there was a chance to do something.

Also, we talked about the regulation around raising or dropping the insurance rates and the time frame involved. I know that, last year, my rates went up significantly in

November. Instead of being a year's rate, they went to a semi-annual, so it was renewed again in July. So it's frustrating when we see the high rates that we're paying compared to our neighbours in other provinces, but we also have to look at what the issues are.

We have to also give a reasonable tool for insurance companies. Now we're forcing them to estimate, almost a year ahead of time, what the rates will be and what the returns will be when they're setting them. It's easy just to ignore the fact that they maybe have an opportunity to drop the rates but it's so cumbersome that they don't bother. It's the same, of course, if you're anticipating the rates going up; you have to start today to get those higher rates. It's just a system that's not working. So we'll look forward to further debate on this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to comment on the remarks that were shared with members from the MPP for Elgin—Middlesex—where is he from?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** London.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Elgin—Middlesex—London.

I think that one of the fundamental problems that our party has with this legislation is around the title. It's called the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act; however, we see very little in the act that is actually going to contribute to fighting fraud and reducing auto insurance rates. What we do see are some major and substantive and, frankly, quite unprecedented changes to the dispute resolution system and also the long-established system of awarding pre-judgment interest. These changes will contribute little, if anything, to reducing auto insurance rates. What they will do is penalize accident victims. They will punish the people who have been harmed in auto accidents and create barriers in terms of their access to justice.

We have some very, very significant problems with this legislation around the changes to the dispute resolution system. They will put the onus on the victim to have to use two entirely different mechanisms to settle their claims. They will have to go into a court system if there is an injury, as well as this new arbitration system, for the accident.

So we have major concerns with the bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I want to thank the members for their comments.

The member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, you now have two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to thank the members from Niagara and London West for their comments. Northumberland—Quinte West: I thank him and, of course, Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry—I should probably add a few more ridings to his name.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** South Glengarry. Thank you, Speaker.

I agree with the member from London West. This bill does very little to deal with fraud. I was quite shocked

that they've totally moved away from licensing health care clinics in this province, which had been identified in the fraud task force as a major contributor to fraud and the cost in the system, particularly in the GTA and Toronto area, for our skyrocketing premiums.

This government has a history of creating task forces and getting recommendations from them, then putting them in a book, throwing them on a shelf, thanking them for writing them and not doing anything with those recommendations.

The fraud task force came up with 38 recommendations. This government has implemented maybe four of those recommendations. There was hope with Bill 15 that they would have the opportunity to implement more of the recommendations. Instead, there are fewer than in Bill 171, from three or four months ago.

I don't know if the election—now it's not as glitzy to regulate the health care clinics. I don't know where they lost their step with regard to fighting the fraud in their system. Unfortunately, we're going to see fewer insurance products in this province, and we're going to see bad drivers receive better discounts. We just have to thank this government for implementing that cut instead of actually getting down to the root cause of the problems with auto insurance and fixing those problems.

As I said before, this is probably not the last time I'm going to rise in this House and speak about auto insurance.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I have an hour to talk to you about auto insurance, so please sit back and enjoy. We will have a wonderful time, I assure you all.

I've broken down my discussion. I'm going to talk about some of the history of what has gone on in auto insurance. I'll take a little different direction than what was taken by my colleague from the Conservative Party. We'll talk about where we're at now, what's going on with the cuts which we fought so hard to see. We'll talk about what the priorities of the Liberal government really are. I want to review some of the steps that have been taken by the NDP and the steps that I've worked really hard on with respect to this file. I want you to start thinking about auto insurance, how it has impacted people, and some of the policies that have been implemented so far and how unfair they are. I want to uncover some of that. So let's go down the rabbit hole together, shall we?

First off, what's the history of the situation? I don't want to go too far back; I want to take you to 2010. The year 2010 marks a significant change in the auto insurance industry. It's very important to look at 2010. There was a completely different climate in auto insurance pre-2010. It changed drastically after 2010. Up until 2010, the insurance companies were experiencing a net loss, what they call a loss ratio, which resulted in—if they added up the amount of premiums they were receiving and what they were paying out, they were in a loss. So they were paying out more money than they were taking in, strictly on the premium side. That changed dramatically post-2010.



One other point to keep in mind: When the insurance companies talk about their profits or their losses, they make some of their profit on the premiums, but they make far more on their investment income. They actually double whatever they're making on premiums. In some cases, it's about that same amount, so you have to times it by two to actually get a true picture of what their profits are. So they have premiums, and they have investment income.

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After 2010, this government recognized that the rates were too high. This is not a surprise; the rates were extremely high and people were struggling. We also have to recognize in this province—outside of some of the core areas in Toronto where we have an existing transit system—which needs improvement—made up of subways and streetcars, some LRTs as well as buses, there isn't really a sustainable transit system. If you're talking to my colleagues from Windsor, if you're talking to people from London, to folks in the surrounding suburbs in Brampton and Scarborough and North York—there isn't really a robust transit system. People actually would love to be able to take transit, but they can't. To get to work, to get to their loved ones, to take them to school, to go to the hospital, they simply need to drive. It's not a luxury. It's not because they just enjoy it; they have to.

Now, if we know that it's a necessity in certain areas, and we've made it so that auto insurance is mandatory—the government has made it mandatory that you must have insurance in this province. It's a product that everyone has to have. That's a great market. If I'm in the business of insurance and I know that every single person who drives on the roads in Ontario has to purchase auto insurance, I know that's a sure-selling product. That's a great product for me. So what have we built into the system? Recognizing that this is mandatory, that you have to purchase auto insurance, we've built into the system a requirement that the government has an obligation to regulate this industry. If you regulate that you have to purchase it, then it makes sense that you have to regulate whether it's affordable or not, whether it's delivered in a fair manner or not. With that in mind, the government has a power, has the ability to regulate this industry. And rightly so, because it's essentially a product that you have to purchase by law.

In 2010, the government recognized the rates were too high. The then Minister of Finance got up and said—I'm essentially paraphrasing—that recognizing that rates are too high, we will bring in some major reforms, huge. In fact, they were the most historically significant changes to auto insurance in pretty much the history of Ontario. The Finance Minister got up and said, "I'm going to be bringing in these changes. These changes are going to reduce the cost to the insurance companies." Well, guess what? They reduced the cost in one year. When bringing in the changes in 2010, they reduced the cost to insurance companies by 50% across the province of Ontario. The statutory accident benefits—the payouts I talked about before—were slashed in half. That's pretty dramatic. On

top of that, if you just localized it to the GTA, the greater Toronto area, those reductions were more like 70%.

Just wrap your head around this. Imagine you're running any business, you're running a restaurant, and overnight, in one year, your major cost—in the case of insurance companies, their major cost is their accident benefits, what they pay out—the major cost to your business is slashed in half in one year. Imagine the position that puts you in. You're going to be in a much better position than you were before, naturally: Your costs have gone down by 50%. Imagine what that means for one particular area. Imagine running a business and in one area—a pretty vast area—your costs went down by 70%.

So naturally, the savings are there; the insurance companies don't deny it. They accept and, in committee hearings, time and time again—in fact, you could Google it and they'll tell you online that, yes, we did in fact see \$2 billion in savings. The insurance companies have seen this, each year, from 2011 onwards, approximately. So 2011, they got the \$2 billion in savings, and 2012, 2013, 2014—we're in that year right now. This hasn't changed.

What happened in 2010 is, the government slashed our benefits. They slashed our coverage. By slashing our coverage, they allowed the insurance companies to save colossal sums of money. What they did, just to put it into specific terms—before, when you were injured, you could claim up to \$100,000 in benefits. They took that \$100,000 in benefits and cut it by half, to \$50,000. So that was a cut of 50% there, in terms of your coverage. On top of that, this government created another category, where they put the cap at \$3,500—\$3,500. Just pause for a moment there. Before that, the very same person could have claimed up to \$100,000; now, Mr. Speaker, that person can only claim \$3,500. Imagine the impact that has on the industry.

You're probably wondering how many people actually are put into that \$3,500 category. How many people is that? Maybe it's not that many people; maybe it's not that significant. Wrong: 80% of people injured in Ontario—80%—are actually put into the minor injury guideline, the \$3,500 cap—80% of people who are injured.

Keep in mind that in Ontario, 80% of people never make a claim in their life. They never make an auto insurance claim in their life. I'm sure you know a lot of people who—I've never made a claim in my life. They're not uncommon. That's 80% of people never make a claim in their life. The 20% that do make a claim—that small 20% that make a claim—of them, the vast majority only get \$3,500. That's the cap that they get. This is the picture of what's going on here in Ontario.

Now you see this historically amazing savings that the insurance companies are enjoying that's happened overnight, from 2010 to 2011—what do you think happened with the insurance rates? Where do you think they went? You would assume, if the costs went down by so much, naturally the insurance rates should have gone down, right? You would expect that, naturally, premiums would

have gone down. Guess what? They didn't go down. They went up by 5%. Go figure.

The insurance companies make a 50% savings—huge—on their costs, their payouts. Instead of premiums going down—they should have gone down by a lot, you would have thought—they go up by 5%.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Talk about highway robbery.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My colleague from Windsor-Essex very rightly says, "Talk about highway robbery."

We now see a situation where this doesn't make any sense. You've cut our benefits; our coverage is slashed. What we received before, we're receiving less of it and we're paying more for it.

Let's put it into an analogy. You're buying a ticket for a movie. The movie ticket used to cost \$15. They cut the costs of the movie. They say, "All right, the movie is not going to cost as much to play." You go to the movie theatre, thinking, "Okay, it's not going to cost them as much to play this movie. Maybe the ticket price is going to go down." You go and you find out the ticket price has actually gone up and you only get to watch half the movie. How does that make any sense? I don't understand this.

That's where we're at with auto insurance. That's the history.

The NDP comes forward—and I realize this was a major issue. Auto insurance was a top issue in all of Brampton, particularly in Bramalea–Gore–Malton. What did we do? First off, we went to the streets and talked to the community. They said, "Listen, this is a major issue. This is an issue that's crushing us. We're paying such amazingly, outrageously high rates. What can you do about it?" And I said, "Listen, I promise we'll get up and we'll fight on this issue. This is an important issue. As the opposition, we'll raise this issue. We'll bring it up in Queen's Park."

It's on the government. It's the government's responsibility, this Liberal government's responsibility, to address it. They're in charge. They're in the driver's seat. The Ministry of Finance is directly in control of FSCO, and FSCO regulates the auto insurance industry—straightforward. The government controls and regulates the insurance industry. It's on them.

Our job, as opposition, is to raise the issue. We raised the issue. We said, "Listen, people in Brampton are struggling." It turns out—guess what?—it's not just in Brampton. It's across the GTA. Folks in North York, people in York South–Weston, folks in Scarborough, people across Brampton are being charged sometimes twice as much as in other areas. There's this unbelievable unfairness going on. We said, "What can you do about it?"

In fact, it's not just a Brampton, Scarborough and North York issue. It turns out that Ontario is paying the highest auto insurance rates in the entire country.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That's not true.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** It's absolutely true. Someone from the back is saying it's not true. It's absolutely true. The rates in Ontario are the absolute highest in the entire

country. Just pull out your smart phone and google it, and it will tell you that. They're the highest rates in the entire country.

On top of that, if you look at our coverage, we're not receiving the best coverage by far. The minor injury guideline is amongst the lowest. That \$3,500 cap is one of the lowest caps in the entire country.

We're not receiving the best product, if you measure it in terms of minor injury guidelines, but we're paying the highest rates in the entire country. It's unbelievable. Thank you very much, to the Liberal government. We appreciate it—no, we don't.

As the opposition, we said, "Listen, we're going to get up and we're going to raise this issue and bring it to Queen's Park and tell this government they need to do something about it." We said, "The insurance companies are enjoying these huge cost savings. We're not receiving the same coverage. You must do something to bring the rates down. People are struggling."

On top of that, the entire province is paying the highest rates in the entire country. On top of that, there's this colossal unfairness where certain regions, just by living there, are paying far more than other areas.

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I want to draw your attention to the way the auto insurance regime works right now. We've decided, as a society, that there are certain generally accepted principles or factors that are socially acceptable and actuarially sound. Basically, they make sense in society, and there is some evidence to support why you should charge someone higher or lower rates. There are four essential criteria. These are the four grounds that you should set your insurance rates by:

- (1) The factor that you use should have a clear, comprehensible connection with the risk being insured.
- (2) The factor should be objective, measurable and verifiable.
- (3) The factor should be, to a great extent, controlled by the insured.
- (4) The factor should be perceived as fair and socially acceptable.

One of the members of the Liberal Party in the back talked about the fact that he starting controlling his driving. He had too many tickets that made him not as favourable as someone to be insured. So based on those criteria, he decided to control himself. He said, "Okay, I'm going to put my cruise control on. I'm not going to speed as much." That absolutely fits within the factor that it's something that, to a great extent, is controlled by the insured—a great example. If you're speeding or driving poorly, you can control that; you can drive better.

But what about where you live? Can you control where you live, and is it socially acceptable to make that a factor? If I choose to live in a certain community—I'm born in that community, all my roots are there, all my friends are there, all my family is there, my employment is there, all the things that I know are there, I'm comfortable there, all my services I access are there—I'm going to be charged twice as much as another community



just because I live there. I'm a good driver, I drive safely, I pay my taxes, I do everything appropriately, but I happen to live in a certain community. Just because I live in that community, I'm going to pay twice as much as somewhere else.

Let's talk about the GTA. In the GTA, everyone knows this: You may live in Mississauga, but you work in Toronto; you live in Scarborough, but you work in Brampton; you live in Brampton, but you work downtown. Take me, for example. I am at Queen's Park every day of the week—my car is here at Queen's Park every day—but I'm being charged rates based on the Peel region. How much sense does that make? If I get in an accident, my accident is going to be in downtown Toronto, where my car spends most of the time while Parliament is in session, like all of us, but I'm going to be charged based on my premiums in Brampton, though most of my accidents will probably take place where I spend most of the time during the week, which is downtown Toronto.

The logic is not there, my friends, it's not a socially acceptable factor, and where is the comprehensible concern with the risk being connected to the driver when we move all around the GTA? It's absolutely unacceptable—a travesty. This is something that shows how unfair the system is.

So we have this problem; we have this major problem. We raise this issue. We see the rates are unfair, the rates are too high, certain areas are being discriminated against unfairly, and we bring forward this issue. We bring forward a petition; 10,000 people signed this petition. We put down 1,000 petitions every day for 10 days leading up to a demand for some change so that we can see the rates come down. We build this issue up and have mainstream media coverage. This one issue that started off in Bramalea–Gore–Malton spreads across the province. We have a province-wide concern and awareness that insurance rates are too high; we need to do something about it.

The NDP brings forward an opposition day motion. This motion called for the government to reduce auto insurance by 15%. Given the amazing profits that the insurance industry is enjoying, given the sustained cut to their costs, which is not going to change—the caps that are now placed are not in jeopardy of being changed. They've been passed; the regulation has been set. Now the caps are \$3,500 for a minor injury, \$50,000 for more serious and then the catastrophic injury. They've saved so much money. We're saying that at the minimum now, with the new climate going on, with the new circumstances, we need a 15% reduction in auto insurance for the drivers of Ontario. We put forward that motion. After all our hard work bringing forward petitions, bringing forward questions in the House, raising this issue time and time again, speaking about it in the media, we gained the momentum and we put this motion forward in this House.

Surprisingly, the Liberal government finally saw the light of day and said, "Okay, we'll support you." They

voted in favour of this motion, and that motion was passed—probably one of the few opposition day motions that asked the government to do something concrete, like reduce insurance rates by 15%, that actually passed. So we had a motion that was passed in the House, a pretty big victory in this battle to raise awareness around auto insurance. The people were happy that it looked like there was some movement being made.

Then comes the budget. Looking at the fact that there's an insurance industry that seems to be taking advantage of people based on where they live and taking advantage of people in the sense that their coverage has gone down but the premiums are still increasing, that these insurance companies are treating people unfairly, we say, "Listen, we need to see a reduction. If you actually care about the folks that are struggling, where it's an affordability issue for them, we need to see a 15% reduction in auto insurance." We put that forward as a demand. The government accepts that demand, accepts our request, and it forms a part of the budget.

Now a year later, guess what happens? The government has said, "We are targeting an 8% reduction the first year and a 7% reduction in the second year." So a year goes by after this budget is passed. One year goes by and we look at the insurance rates. I go to my community and ask folks in Brampton. We ask folks outside of Brampton, folks around the province. We ask folks in Scarborough and North York and in southwestern Ontario. We ask, "What has been going on with your rates?" Well, in the GTA, people did not see their rates go down. The vast majority of folks that I spoke to from Bramalea–Gore–Malton and folks from Brampton said that instead of going down, they saw their rates go up once again.

So the government promises a reduction, and instead of seeing a reduction, people see their rates go up. How is that possible, if you have any sort of conviction and you believe in following through on your word, that people see their rates go up? Each time an insurance company increases its rates, it has to file for permission with FSCO. So the government has to approve of rates. How is this government approving rate increases when they've been given a mandate to reduce auto insurance rates? How does that make any sense?

So I spoke to folks in our community. We said, "Listen, have the rates gone down?" They said, "No, our rates have not gone down." We said, "If your rates have not gone down, then how can we possibly support this government?" They said, "Of course you can't support the government. They broke their promise. They broke their promise to reduce auto insurance rates. They said they would reduce them at least by 8% in the first year, and we haven't seen any of those reductions."

The government themselves claim that they didn't hit the 8% at all; they hit something closer to 5%. So they themselves admit they didn't make well on their promise. Their promise was to reduce by at least 8% in the first year. They did not do it. They broke their promise. We said, "Listen, you broke your promise, amongst many

others. We can no longer support this government. We can't trust this government to follow through. They broke their promise on reducing auto insurance."

We hoped that the folks of Ontario would have seen that this government breaks its promises time and time again and had big problems with their reliability and credibility when it came to the scandals that they were facing. Again, the folks of Ontario chose to support the Liberal government.

We're not going to give up our fight. We respect the decision of the Ontario people. But again, what message does it send if people are seeing you break your promises time and time again and we see voter turnout at an all-time low? It's creating a cynical population. People just don't believe in the government anymore. That's why our turnouts are so low. They don't see any hope.

What we're trying to do as the NDP is, we're standing for our principles. We're going to stand up for the folks in Ontario and let them know that there is another way. They can see a party and have a party that will follow through on their commitments, will make reasonable and realistic goals attainable and will stand up for principled positions towards a more progressive society.

So that's where we've come from. That's where we fought and that's where we got to.

Now the Liberal government says, "Okay, we're still"—even though very clearly we have reports where the finance minister has indicated that they agree that with less than a year to go, they've only seen a 6% decrease—they pledged an 8% target and they haven't reached that—they insist that they're going to meet this target. How are they going to meet this target? Well, they brought in this bill.

Now, Bill 15, which was once Bill 171, is a bill that's named very strategically. One of my colleagues, the member from London West, brought this up. It's named the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, Bill G15.

Let me take you through this bill and show you—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Oh, I challenge you to show me. I'll point out all the pieces.

The vast majority of this bill has nothing to do with fighting fraud—the vast majority. What it does do is put more money in the pockets of the insurance companies.

1700

On top of that, what we've seen already is that if you just give a blank cheque—whether it's to a corporation, whether it's to an insurance company—there's no guarantee that that will actually benefit the people. We've seen that, time and time again, when it comes to corporate tax cuts as a tool to increase employment. It doesn't work. You give a corporation a tax cut. They can take that money and reinvest it; they can take that money and sit on it; they can take that money and move it to another factory in another country. We've seen companies do that. We have a number of examples of that happening.

Similarly, with the insurance companies, with the insurance industry, if you give them a blank cheque and

you try to put more profits in their pockets, there's no guarantee that that's going to reduce premiums. We saw the biggest cost savings ever in 2010, which resulted in a \$2-billion annual savings, actually increase premiums afterwards. There's no guarantee unless you put some strings attached to it. This bill doesn't have any metrics where, if we implement this insurance change or if we implement this tribunal change, that's going to result in a 10% reduction, a 2% reduction or a 3% reduction. There's absolutely no connection. There are no strings attached. There's going to be another series of amendments that are going to benefit the insurance companies without any sort of connection to reducing premiums for drivers.

Let's go through the various elements of this bill. Using the explanatory note as an appendix, there is a component of this bill that deals with tow and storage services. There is a component that deals with repair and storage liens. There is a component that deals with the licensing of insurance agents. Let's talk about those three right now. We'll group those three together. These are presumably the only three that have anything to do with insurance fraud.

We have tow trucks. Addressing tow trucks is an important issue. Sure, there are very valid concerns around the tow truck industry, and they need to be addressed. I know many tow truck drivers who would like to see their industry receive an increased level of respect, and part of that will come from having certain regulations that will ensure that there are good tow truck drivers who continue to do the good work they do, and the ones who aren't doing such a good job are regulated or, in certain circumstances, not allowed to continue working if they're going to breach a certain consumer bill of rights that's proposed—a tow and storage consumer bill of rights.

But how much is towing and storage going to impact the overall picture of auto insurance fraud in this province? What is the measurable impact? Where is the evidence to suggest that this is a big impact? How much in dollars is this going to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I challenge you. If someone says "a lot," show me the dollars. How much? What's the prediction? What is the estimated value? There is none. You can say "a lot"—that's great—sitting in the backbench, saying, "Yes, it's going to save a lot." Well, how much? Where's the evidence? If you don't have evidence behind the argument, the argument is pretty weak. You need to have some evidence. Show us what the savings are going to be and, on top of that, show us how those savings are actually going to reduce our premiums. That's the most important thing. Where's that calculation? I assure you that it's not there.

Licensing insurance agents and adjusters—are you suggesting that insurance agents and adjusters are a significant part of the fraud, that the insurance agents themselves are responsible for creating fraud? I would highly doubt that. The adjusters that work for the insurance companies, licensing them—these are the insurance companies themselves.



There's so much talk about fraud, but there's so little talk about what the insurance companies themselves can do about addressing it. We absolutely agree that we need to address fraud in any system, whether it's auto insurance, whether it's in health care, whether it's in any part of our system. We don't accept it. We don't believe that it's an important thing. But if you talk about it so much—that fraud is a big problem—who is the primary mover in this industry? It's the insurance industry. If you talk about fraud so much and there's no discussion about what the insurance industry can do as the ones who write the cheque—at the end of the day, it's the insurance company that writes the cheque—shouldn't there be some onus placed on that industry itself to make sure that they're not engaging in activities which are actually wasteful and they're not supporting fraudulent activities? Shouldn't they have an onus and a responsibility? These are multi-billion-dollar companies. Why isn't the onus on them? We talk about fraud in the insurance industry. There has to be a discussion about what the insurance industry itself can do.

Then we have the repair and storage liens, issues around repair and storage. Again, how much is this going to impact fraud—what are the dollars?—and how much of this is going to guarantee a reduction in premiums? Where's the connection between the two?

I can tell you that the two biggest components of this bill, which have absolutely nothing to do with fraud, are the changes to the tribunal and the changes to the interest rates. Let's talk about those two changes.

There's a great article written by Mr. Shanoff, and he talks about this issue. He talks about what's really going to happen when we actually implement this bill—if this bill is implemented, what would it actually do? We know for certain that this will benefit insurance companies. Mr. Shanoff wrote an article on March 15, 2014, entitled "Little Benefit for Victims." This article talks about Bill 171 at the time, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, which is now Bill 15.

Mr. Shanoff writes:

"I can see where reduction of interest rates, removal of special awards and shunting cases away from experienced, independent arbitrators would benefit insurance companies.

"But where is the benefit to drivers and accident victims?"

That's exactly what this bill is going to do. This bill is going to reduce the interest rates that insurance companies have to pay. It will remove the ability for special awards in cases where arbitrators find that the insurance companies are clearly in the wrong and need to make a payment immediately. There was a power that arbitrators had; that's going to be removed.

On top of that, this bill is going to remove the ability to challenge any sort of accident benefit claim in court. So you can't go to the courts. If the insurance companies are not paying what you're entitled to, and you know that it's not going to be settled at arbitration and you need to go to court to challenge it, you can't go to court at all.

On top of that, it's going to create a bigger problem, and my colleague touched on this. You can still bring a tort claim. You can still bring a claim that you've been injured in such a way that there's a significant impact to your life. This is separate from the actual accident benefit. You may bring another claim. You can bring that to court. But often when you're bringing that claim—you're going to court because you have a tort claim; you have a legitimate claim that there was extreme negligence on the part of the other driver and you're bringing a tort claim to court—normally what happens is there's also a point where, if the insurance company has actually denied you some coverage that you're entitled to, the lawyer can bring those both together and say, "Okay, we're going to bring one application to court that includes both the accident benefits denial"—the fact that the insurance company said, "No, we're not going to cover you," in something that you think you should rightfully be entitled to coverage for—and on top of that, you can bring your regular claim for tort. You can bring them both together.

Often, people who are in these circumstances are horribly injured. They're very vulnerable. They're in one of the worst positions of their lives, people who are down and out in a way I couldn't even imagine. These folks, who are already down and out, have lawyers who are willing to fight the case for them, and they can bring it together in one application, one case, and take it to court. Now they can't do that anymore. So now, you have one case you can bring to court, and the other case has to go through arbitration—and only arbitration. How unfair is that?

That's limiting access to the courts for these folks who are so vulnerable. These are people who are injured; these are people who are in difficult situations, often very disabled, physically disabled in a terrible way, and this is the type of legislation you're bringing forward, where you're going to limit their ability to go to court.

I go back to Mr. Shanoff's question: "Where is the benefit to drivers and accident victims?"

When Mr. Shanoff talks about "shunting cases away from experienced, independent arbitrators," what does he mean? Well, Justice Cunningham had a report. Justice Cunningham said there's got to be some changes to the system; the way the system is currently set up, there need to be some changes. They enlisted the aid of this wonderful judge, who gave a report. He said there's one problem in the overall way the system is set up: FSCO is the regulator.

FSCO basically makes the decisions about what happens in the industry. They regulate it as the government regulator of auto insurance. FSCO is also where the arbitrators are housed. So you have the regulators and the decision-makers in the same building, in the same office, and there is a concern around that.

1710

Justice Cunningham's concern was just that FSCO shouldn't be doing both, that there's an appearance here that if, on the one hand, you're regulating, and on the

other hand, making a decision, doesn't add up and they should be held separately, which makes sense. But Justice Cunningham didn't advise and didn't say that you should get rid of the FSCO arbitrators. Why do I bring this issue up? What's the point? What are the FSCO arbitrators about?

The current arbitrators, the current decision-makers, let's say, who deal with any dispute where the insurance company hasn't paid you coverage that you think you're entitled to, are people who are salaried. They have stable employment; they're experienced; they have handled numerous cases; and they know the case law. That's the current pool of folks who make the decisions. They're transitioning from the FSCO arbitrators to the Licence Appeal Tribunal.

Now, there's nothing wrong with the Licence Appeal Tribunal. They're folks who deal with highway traffic matters. They deal with matters related to tickets and things of that nature. They're per diem, meaning that they come on a day-to-day basis—they're not steadily employed as a salaried employee—and they are appointed at the pleasure of the ministry. They're folks who don't have the same stability, the same independence. They're per diem; they work on a day-to-day basis. They can be appointed or not appointed by the ministry, or through ministry regulations. They don't have any experience with this particular type of law. They don't have experience with the exhaustive case law around what is appropriate coverage and what's not, what is deemed suitable and what's not deemed suitable.

The current FSCO arbitrators have that wealth of knowledge. They've been doing this for years. They have the training. They have that independent position, they have that salaried position, that ensures they can remain independent.

We all know that in law, but also in many things, to have a good decision-maker, you need someone who is independent, who is not swayed by the whims of political tides, who is not swayed by public pressure; someone who makes a decision based on principle and doesn't make a decision because their appointment is at stake—they don't know if they'll be hired tomorrow or be brought back tomorrow.

It's clear that an independent decision-maker is always preferable to a non-independent decision-maker. The fact that this government is moving away from experienced, independent, knowledgeable arbitrators to folks who, through no fault of their own, don't have the same level of experience, the same level of independence—again, as Mr. Shanoff says, I can see why this would benefit insurance companies. “But where is the benefit to drivers and accident victims?” I answered the question: There is none. There is no benefit to drivers and accident victims. This is another example of the priorities of this government.

What are the priorities? Let's look at all the examples we have before us. The priorities of this Liberal government are very clear. They want to continually put profits in the pockets of insurance companies and they

don't want to address the increasing concern around extremely high rates of auto insurance in this province. That's their priority very clearly. Look at all the steps. You see a 50% reduction in costs in one year for auto insurance companies. You see two years to make a 15% reduction in premiums for drivers. That alone shows you the priority. You jump through hoops to get reductions for auto insurance companies; you drag your feet so slowly to bring any benefits to drivers. It shows your priorities very clearly. So that's with respect to the changes in the licence tribunal.

Now, there's also a change in the interest rate. What's that all about? The initial pre-judgment interest rates were set at 5%, and now the proposal is that they be reduced to 1.3%. What does that mean? Let's break that down. If there's a claim—I sue my insurance company and I am entitled to \$100,000; I'm entitled to that \$100,000 and that's what I should be awarded at end of the day. Currently, the way the system works is, if the insurance company says, “No, I'm not paying the \$100,000,” then there's a 5% interest on that: 5% interest is charged and it accrues. So now, if I'm the insurance company, I look at this case and say, “Listen, chances are, we're probably going to lose this case. If we don't settle this case within a couple years, we're paying 5% interest on top of that. It's not a good look for us financially. We're going to see a big loss, or we could make a lot more money if we just quickly paid this off and then reinvested our money and made a return on that money instead of holding it up, paying 5% interest on it and then we have to pay him anyways.” So what that does is, it encourages insurance companies, when there's a real and legitimate case made against them, that they should probably settle, because it's going to cost them more in the long run.

What happens if the interest rates are dropped to 1.3%? Well, the insurance companies know that you can get a GIC at 2%. If I'm paying a 1.3% interest rate, there's absolutely no benefit to me to settle. I can just take that \$100,000 that I have to pay out to somebody and put that in some sort of safe vehicle that can actually give me a 2% rate of return, which is not too hard to get, or even more than that—you can probably find ways to get a higher return on equity. So they take that money, invest it somewhere, easily beat 5%, and say, “What's the point of me settling? There's absolutely no benefit to settling early. I'll just drag this out as long as I need to.”

On the other hand, you have a powerful insurance company, and you have a vulnerable, potentially disabled individual who doesn't have any money and who says, “What do we do here? I need the money badly. I'm struggling.” The likelihood of them settling for something lower gets higher and higher. Again, how does this benefit drivers or accident victims? It does not.

Who does this benefit? The insurance industry. Where are the priorities of this government? It's clear; you're not making it hard for me to figure out your priorities. I just look at the legislation. I flip through it and I can see. The priorities are pretty clear: You want to ensure that the insurance industry gets whatever they want, anything



they need when it comes to making more profits. That's your priority. "What can we do to increase the profits of insurance companies?" Period. That's your priority. Your priority is not to help out drivers. Your priority is not to help out accident victims. This law clearly does neither. It does not benefit drivers and it does not benefit accident victims.

So we've gone on a journey here. We've talked about some of the history. We've talked about some of the current legislation and how it's impacting drivers. Let's look at a little bit more detail about what this bill actually does and how, again, this is going to assist drivers. We touched very briefly on the licensing of insurance agents and adjusters. Now, I want, folks, to take a closer look at this.

The government, again, titled their bill very strategically: fighting fraud and reducing auto insurance. My colleague from London West said very well and very appropriately that the problem with this bill—there's many problems, but one of the problems is the name of the bill. Because while the bill has all sorts of problems, and naturally we want to vote against something that has all these problems, you're going to turn around and say, "Oh, you're voting against fighting fraud. You're voting against reducing auto insurance." We're not. We absolutely support reducing fraud. We absolutely support reducing auto insurance. But all of this has to be done with a principle in mind, with a goal in mind.

Your goal we're all clear on. Your goal is, "What can we do, by any means necessary, to increase the profits for insurance companies?" That's not our goal. I'm sorry. It's just not our goal. Our goal is, "What can we do, in a measured, reasonable way, to actually benefit drivers and accident victims?" That's what we want to do. We're not here to represent the interests of the insurance industry. We're here to represent the interests of the drivers and their accident benefits when it comes to auto insurance. That's who we're here to benefit.

This is something you can really see through. When you put in your bill the licensing of insurance agents and adjusters—I talked about this before. You're going to put in legislation, and it proposes to look at various components around how you can limit and regulate folks who are either in the adjusting business or are insurance agents. It includes provisions that will speak about the licences, cases for when it should be issued, when it should be renewed, when it can be revoked—again, all these issues around insurance agents. I ask you—maybe in the question and comments someone can rise up and tell me this: How much fraud are insurance agents committing? Is that a significant cost? Do you have some evidence to suggest there is a pandemic of insurance agents who are defrauding the system? Where is the evidence to support this measure? There's absolutely no problem with this measure; it's fine. But how does this actually reduce auto insurance? How does this fight fraud? Where is the fraud-fighting measure in that?

1720

The same thing applies to adjusters. You talk about creating a system that would allow for the issuance,

renewal, revocation, suspension and surrender of their licence—great. Why not? We should have qualified and responsible adjusters who work in our system. How does that reduce fraud? Where's your evidence to suggest that adjusters are committing heinous acts of fraud? Where is the evidence to suggest they're committing any fraud? Are you suggesting that the insurance agents and adjusters are the ones responsible for the current problem in our system?

Again, I like to rely on evidence as opposed to just putting fluff in a bill. We sat with the chair of the anti-fraud task force, and I asked him, "Where is the fraud? What is the fraud all about?" He broke down the fraud into a couple of components. He said that there's organized fraud, where there are criminal elements that have organized different strategic ways to defraud the system. That's one. There was a system of not criminal, but quasi-criminal, where we had health service providers who were overbilling or charging in an inappropriate manner that in some cases probably rose to the level of criminal activity, but you had overcharging in those health professions. Then you had a case of individuals who, anecdotally, would boost up their claims. If they had a car and it was stolen, they said, "Oh, there was a laptop in the car as well," or "There was a diamond ring in the car as well." I said, "Okay, break down those three areas of fraud and which is the most significant?" He said that by far, it's the organized fraud because recent changes have really reduced the issue around the health service providers.

My colleague from the Conservative Party talked about, why is that component missing from here? Why is the health regulation component missing from here? Largely because the circumstances that existed, where there were significant costs associated with health service providers—that was all eradicated post-2010. The evidence has shown that if you can only claim \$3,500 max for 80% of people, there's really not much fraud left there to go after. That fraud has been eradicated, right?

If that's been eradicated, it makes sense that it's not included in this bill but, again, what are you doing to really address this situation? If they say the three major causes—one is organized crime, two is the health care providers and three is incidental. The incidental: The anti-fraud task force individual said that it's pretty much negligible. It's not a very significant part of it. It's the first component and, to a lesser extent, the second, but that's been mostly dealt with.

If that's what the anti-fraud task force is saying, "Here's the evidence"—this is the task force entrusted with this responsibility to find out where the fraud is, what the fraud is, what does it look like and what's going on, and they say it's major crime, criminal elements, your solution is, "Let's license insurance agents and adjusters." How are you addressing that issue, then? That's not what they said the problem was. They said that the problem was much bigger than that.

That's a clear example of distraction. You're putting an element in this bill that doesn't address fraud at all. It

shows that you're not committed to actually addressing this problem and it shows very clearly what your priorities are.

Now, I do give you credit—and I think after going on for a good 45 minutes of a lot of criticism, I should give you some credit. The towing industry is certainly an industry where there are a lot of concerns. I spoke to a couple of tow truck drivers recently and they told me very clearly that there are certain practices going on that they've complained about time and time again. This is the tow truck industry itself.

If you look at any industry—and I'm sure you all have experience in various professions—I would say the vast majority of any profession, the vast majority of people are trying to live an honest life, trying to make ends meet for their families and trying to live a decent and honourable life. I think most people want to do that, if they can. They try their best to do so.

Anyone who is part of a particular profession wants to ensure their profession is looked upon favourably. No one wants their profession to have a bad reputation; no one wants that. The average person doesn't want that; the majority of people don't want that. They want their profession to be respected. Tow truck drivers themselves know that there are certain bad elements in the tow truck industry, and there are some bad systems in place that are encouraging bad players. In fact, if you have a bad system, it creates a bad culture. So they agree that there is a bad culture around certain activities in the tow truck industry.

But they've complained about it. They've raised these issues. These aren't new issues. They've said that there are certain agreements that go on that are inappropriate, where a tow truck driver has an agreement to take a truck to a certain facility or a certain garage against the will of the driver, of the owner of the vehicle. They've told you about this, time and time again. There are certain people who use tactics where they bully other truck drivers away and they try to enforce a quasi monopoly over a certain region by bullying tactics. They've told you about this. I've met with tow truck drivers who have said, "We've complained about this regularly, but there's no action taken by this government."

I applaud you for at least addressing some of the concerns. One of the biggest components of tow and storage services that I think is warranted, and it has been long in need, is the tow and storage consumer bill of rights. On this component, I want to encourage you to look at some of the other stakeholders involved and ensure that you get a broader picture of the problem so that you can address it once and for all.

I also have another suggestion for you. There are certain non-contentious components of this bill. If you would cleave out the towing and storage component, the insurance agents and adjusters component and the repair and storage liens, put that in a separate bill, the "minor, tiny steps towards making a little bit of a dent in fighting fraud act," we could support that, because that would be more accurate—the "taking minor, somewhat insignifi-

cant steps to addressing fraud act." Sure. I would vote for that. I would have no problem with voting for that. And it would say exactly what it did.

But your very ambitious name for the bill doesn't really fit what's in it. I am hoping people will take a little closer look and see that most of this is the "increasing the profit margin for insurance companies bill" and the "pretending that we're doing something more than that by throwing in a couple of other components act." That's really what we're looking at, and I'm hoping that my 50 minutes have shown some people that there are some holes in this bill.

Let's talk about some of the other issues around auto insurance that I would have liked to have seen you look at.

One of the biggest problems and one of the most important things we need to look at, if you really want to fix the auto insurance industry, is—we've already come to this point. If you accept that if the government mandates something—the government also has a responsibility to regulate that thing. If you mandate that people have to have auto insurance, we should also mandate that it's delivered in a fair way. Do you agree with that? Let's hope that you agree with that.

How can you regulate an industry? What are some of the things you need to know that go on in the industry? One of the things that there's current evidence on is that you track—and at the government, we track—what the premiums are that are received, what's coming in to insurance companies, you track that; and you track what's going out, what's being paid out. It makes a lot of sense, right? You've got to know what the companies are paying out and you've got to know what's going in.

Why do you want to know that? You want to know that because you want to know if the insurance industry is making a profit or not. That's really what it comes down to. If the insurance company is making colossal profits, then you could say: "Hey, listen. You're making colossal profits on a product that we've mandated by law that people have to have. It's kind of unfair for you to make a killing off of them. Maybe you could reduce those premiums a bit."

You need to know what the profits are, you would think. That seems to be logical, right? That's the only reason. Why else would you be keeping data on the premiums that are being received by insurance companies and the payouts? You're doing that so you have a picture of what the profits are.

Well, guess what? Though you have a very clear picture of the premiums coming in and the costs going out, you actually don't have—this government does not have—a clear handle on what the profits are. In fact, in committee we spent a large portion of time arguing about those profits.

Why is it possibly acceptable to not know what an industry is making in profits if you're trying to regulate it? How could there ever be a debate on that? How can you set rates if you don't know what the companies are making? How can FSCO do its job? If FSCO can't tell



me clearly what the profits are, how can they set regulations? How can they set the rates? It makes no sense.

In fact, it's not just a problem limited to FSCO; the insurance industry itself can't get it right.

1730

They commissioned a report. They said, "Listen, we'll tell you what our profits are." There's no bias here. The Insurance Bureau of Canada, the lobby group for all the insurance companies of Canada, paid an auditor to give them a report on what the profits are—probably no bias there at all. There's probably no sort of vested interest in the insurance lobbyists for the entire country paying an auditor to tell them what their profits are. It sounds totally reasonable to me, doesn't it? I'm being sarcastic here. I don't know if that's going to be picked up by Hansard. Please insert sarcasm to the previous four sentences.

There are two auditors, KPMG and J. S. Cheng. They both are dealing with the exact same companies and they're asked to come up with their profits. KPMG's report indicates a 2012 profit of \$417 million, and J. S. Cheng indicates it's actually \$629 million—just a \$200-million difference. No big deal. So what, right?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** A couple zeroes.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** That's huge. A \$200-million difference? The exact same industry? Two different auditors, one says \$629 million and the other says \$417 million. That's huge. That's the difference between posting a loss or posting a profit. These are the auditors that were paid by the insurance companies to tell the world and Ontario what their profits were, and they couldn't come up with the same numbers.

So how are you regulating this industry? You don't know how much they're making. If I tell you they're making a profit, you can't even tell me they're not making a profit without relying on their numbers. But you're the government. You're supposed to be independent. You should have a handle on how much these companies are making.

One of our proposals was to figure out what they're making and to figure out a true picture of their profits. And not just their profits in Canada because, God bless the insurance companies, but if they make a loss in another province, that's not our problem here in Ontario. If they lose because there's been a tragic flooding in another province or some other serious problem or disaster, that's shouldn't affect the drivers in Ontario. We should set our rates in Ontario based on the automobile insurance product of Ontario. That's what our responsibility is. We should look at the profits they're making on auto insurance here and whether or not there should be a reduction in those rates based on what they're making here in Ontario. That's only fair.

I encourage you to take the step to figure out what are the profits of the industry that you're purporting to regulate so that you can actually make an informed decision about that. That would be my suggestion, my humble suggestion. I think it makes some sense. I hope you'll take a look at it.

I want to go back now to talk about some of the unfairness in the system. This is an important element. If you have a system that, again, is mandatory, there has got to be criteria and factors that are used that are fair. We have certain factors right now that are used, and they make sense. You have your driving record. The driving record can predict whether or not you're going to get in an accident or not. That's fair. You have things like years of experience. That makes sense. It's a fair criterion. If you drive for a number of years you're more likely to have more experience and you'll know how to handle certain circumstances, so your premiums can be lower.

These criteria make sense; there are certain criteria that don't make sense. I want to challenge the criteria of territorial ratings. There are certain differences that are fair and there are certain differences that are not fair. The way it works right now, if you live in southwestern Ontario, northern Ontario or in rural communities, those are significantly different and they should be treated differently. That makes sense. They're completely different. You compare the GTA, which has the largest density of population and the largest density of cars in the entire province—yes, the GTA is different than southwestern Ontario. It's different than northern Ontario and eastern Ontario. It is different. That's fair. But now let's look at the GTA itself.

The GTA is pretty homogenous. We have some major highways that we all take. The 401 cuts across east-west. You have the 427 that goes north-south, and you have the Don Valley Parkway that goes north-south as well, and you have the Gardiner that takes you into Toronto. Everybody uses those highways to get around. Whether you live in Scarborough, whether you live in Brampton, whether you live in Mississauga, whether you live in York South-Weston, you are taking one of these highways, and the 400. You're taking a 400-series highway, you're taking the Gardiner, and you're getting around on those, and we know that people in Ontario move around a lot. You might live in one part of the city and you might work in another part of the city. So the idea that you can see someone in a particular part of the greater Toronto area paying twice as much as another part just defies logic to me. How is it possible that you can have one place being charged twice as much as another place within a 20- or 30-minute radius? It's all the same area.

I wanted to figure out why this is going on. I tried to uncover this a bit, and I want to tell you a very troubling story. This is something that I think is quite concerning, and I hope it concerns you as much as it concerns me. We asked the insurance industry point blank, "Okay, tell us about the way this thing works. How does this insurance thing work?" We asked them, "Our understanding is, if someone has life insurance or disability insurance, if they're injured, the requirement is that they have to tap into their life insurance or disability insurance first, before going to the auto insurance." The insurance industry said, "Yes, that's correct."

I said, "Okay, let me back up for a second. If I have life insurance or disability insurance and I get injured, you're not going to pay out of my auto insurance; you're

going to pay out of my life insurance and disability insurance first?" They said, "Yes."

"What about if certain communities that have a higher population of people who are better off, who are more well paid and have more life insurance or disability insurance, and other parts of the city where there are people who don't have life insurance, don't have disability insurance and are less likely to have it? If you have a density of people with life insurance, will they cost you less?" Answer: "Yes."

There are certain areas in the city where there are folks who are wealthier—and there's no fault that they are wealthier—and have a higher likelihood of having life insurance or disability insurance, who are paying less auto insurance premiums, and certain areas where they have no life insurance because they are working poor and having difficult times, and they are paying higher auto insurance rates. If this is true, that's a serious travesty, and something needs to be done about it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm responding to the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, his very lengthy delivery today, talking to us about Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. As you know, this bill was reintroduced on July 15 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard that our government is committed to keeping auto insurance fair and affordable for the more than nine million people who are drivers in the province of Ontario. Our target is to try and reduce rates by 15% by next August. Sadly, we'd be closer to achieving that target, those goals, had the NDP unfortunately not forced the election and stalled the passage of this bill, so we'd be seeing those savings sooner.

We have heard some very creative interpretations from the NDP member across the floor on where he thinks car insurance rates are at, but I say this to you as a former journalist with 36 years' experience. When I report information, I do so based on a foundation of fact, so please know this to be a fact: Rates are down by 6% on average since August 2013, and, like I said, we are on track to try and reach our 15% rate reduction by next summer.

There's a very interesting tweet that was put out by one of his colleagues. The candidate in Halton for the NDP, in the last election, said, "Just got my latest car insurance payment update, and I'm paying \$22 less a month," so she is saving \$260. So there's an NDP member who is seeing some savings.

Please know this as a fact. There are some insurance companies that are already reporting lower rates: Allstate, Economical and Waterloo insurance, just to name a few. So, you see, if you do shop around, there are savings for you.

We're committed to passing this legislation to reduce rates and to fight fraud for Ontario drivers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** I'd like to make a few comments on the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton's presentation on Bill 15.

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The problem here is, we have fraudulent activities in automobile insurance that have driven insurance rates very high—much higher than they should be. How do we remedy that problem? This bill is making an attempt at doing that. A year ago, the member of our party from Elgin–Middlesex–London came up with a plan to address this very problem. He had some excellent ideas, and it's unfortunate that those couldn't have been incorporated into a bill.

However, with respect to this bill, the problem is that we have fraud in insurance, and it seems to be that organized crime in certain parts of Ontario is the cause of what's happening here. Towing charges for damaged cars are exorbitantly high in some cases. Storage charges are high—body shop charges, health care clinics, legal services. They are falsely inflated, or service is not even provided—and it's with very organized people who are successful at defrauding insurance companies with high claims.

We must be careful, as we try to correct this matter, not to paint everybody in the industry—towing cars, storing them, autobody shops, health clinics and legal services—with the negative brush of criminal activity. Most people are doing a fair and reasonable job—fair work at a fair price. So we want to be careful of that, Mr. Speaker.

I think if I could make one comment, let's appreciate the people out there who are of good character and integrity, doing a good job, providing a fair service at a fair price. We pretty much know what the problem is. We need to attack those people who are defrauding insurance companies with high bills—and, of course, the consumers are being charged very high insurance rates.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further comments?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** First of all, I am so pleased to have been in the House to listen to my colleague the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton as he so very eloquently dissected the blatant inadequacies of this bill, frankly. He has provided a comprehensive breakdown of what those inadequacies are, how they affect drivers in the province of Ontario and, conversely, how they affect to the positive the insurers in the province of Ontario.

I think we've levelled some criticism at the title of the bill, the title that the Liberal government of the day has given to the bill, which is Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates. I would submit that the title should be changed to the "it's a great day to be an insurance company in the province of Ontario bill," because they are going to continue to benefit at the expense of drivers in this province. We saw it in 2010, when the changes were made to increase maximum profitability for those insurers, to the tune of \$2 billion a year. They are making out handsomely at the same time as reducing their liabilities, the benefits that they are to pay out to drivers. It is unfair.



Speaker, the focus of the government and the official opposition has been fraud. I think it's a diversionary tactic: "Talk about fraud. Make sure we address fraud." When do we address the greed in the industry, is my question. Is greed illegal? No, it isn't. Unfortunately, greed is not illegal; fraud is. Let's call it what it is. It is greed inherent in a system that is mandated to be delivered to drivers. They're mandated to be insured. It is your responsibility, as a government, to ensure that we are overseeing that system and that there's fairness infused in it.

We've put forward measures that the government should have adopted, could have adopted, but has been reluctant to do so. We'll continue to fight, and I know my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton will continue to be the champion for his riding and this issue as we move forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the very important work we're doing to fight fraud and reduce insurance rates through Bill 15. I know that in my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood this is an issue that is of particular significance, and I've talked to residents about this.

We are making progress, and I think it's important that we acknowledge the progress that has already been made since August 2003. Rates have come down in Ontario by an average of 6%, and we're well on our way to continuing to drive those rates down even further—in particular, the work that we're doing on fraud prevention. I think that it is very important that we send a signal to everyone that we are not going to tolerate any type of fraud that drives rates needlessly high.

The work that insurance companies do to provide the necessary coverage and protection for drivers is valued. It's valued and it's something that we want to work with the industry on. But when it comes to needless activities that are driving fraud, we want to make sure those don't happen. The task force that has been working on that is well under way. We're very much looking forward to implementing those recommendations and ensuring we continue that good work.

I really wanted to further emphasize as well that consumers do have a voice in this. They should be talking to their insurance providers, and that's something that I share with people as we talk about this issue in the riding, because it's particularly important to Scarborough, as my neighbour in Scarborough-Rouge River and others know. It is of importance to our community. But definitely, contacting the insurance providers and brokers and asking for that rate reduction, shopping around, is also something consumers can do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you to all the members for their comments.

I will now return to the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton. You have two minutes for your reply.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I want to thank all the members who joined in the debate. Thank you for your contributions and thank you for your comments.

I want to say a couple of things in closing. The government supported our motion asking for a 15% reduction in auto insurance. They supported that motion (1) because it was the right thing to do, and (2) because they knew it was possible. When we put forward our demand for a 15% reduction in auto insurance before the previous budget, they accepted it because they knew it was possible. If they knew it was possible, the fact that they have not reached their target now—they were supposed to hit 8% reductions by August 2014—can mean only one thing: It means they are not committed to that result. They are not committed to reducing auto insurance rates in Ontario.

They promised they would reach 8% by August 2014, and the fact that they had not reached that by the time the budget was tabled means that they did not follow through on their commitment. They knew it was possible, because otherwise, why would you promise something that wasn't possible? Why would you promise something that you couldn't achieve? Unless you were trying to dupe the public, and I don't think you were trying to do that—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I withdraw.

If you knew it was possible and you made the promise, and a year after the budget being passed you haven't achieved that 8%, it means you're not taking this seriously, you're not taking the concerns of drivers in Ontario seriously, you're not taking the fact that auto insurance rates are so high in this province—you're not making that a priority, and your true priorities are the insurance companies of Ontario, not the people of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to be given the opportunity today to join in the debate on Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act.

Mr. Speaker, it's appalling to see the third party accusing us, the governing party, of not moving forward on this particular bill. We know what happened on June 12. The people have spoken. We could have moved this bill along if we didn't have this election.

But going forward, let me provide some historical context to the members who are here today. In 2013, this government made a commitment to reducing insurance rates. That was 2013. A year later, the government continued to work on reducing auto insurance rates as part of its strategy. We also accepted the recommendations from the Honourable Mr. Justice Cunningham to the Minister of Finance regarding the transformation of auto insurance, particularly the statutory accident benefits in terms of the dispute resolution process.

The other piece is that government has consistently been in support of and acted on the task force's recommendations, one of them involving the establishment of the special investigation unit—which the Attorney General, previously the Minister of Community Safety and

Correctional Services, had been involved with—the special unit on dealing with serious frauds, including auto insurance fraud. We know the OPP, working with the various police detachments, including Toronto police, have been active on this particular matter. You and I both know, Mr. Speaker, that in Scarborough there have been charges laid recently against some chiropractors in terms of health insurance fraud.

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So working together—we heard our colleague opposite talk about the fraudsters, meaning organized crime may be involved. We need to be vigorously pursuing this and prosecuting these kinds of fraud because all of us are affected by this kind of criminal activity.

The other piece is, the government of Ontario is also addressing the task force's key recommendation on licensing health service providers, meaning that a provider dealing with an insurance company must be licensed; the previous speaker talked about how, currently, drug-stores have to be managed and overseen by pharmacists. So FSCO, better known as the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, began to accept licence applications from health service providers on June 1, 2014, and the licences will become effective December 1, 2014. Again, the government is committed to accepting and addressing the task force's recommendation.

The other piece here is—the task force made numerous recommendations, and that's what we're responding to under Bill 15. As you can see, in Bill 15 there are multiple strategies. I'm going to read each part of the amendment of the law.

First, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario Act, 1997; the Insurance Act; the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act; the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act; the Consumer Protection Act, 2002; the Repair and Storage Liens Act; and the Highway Traffic Act, which is under the Ministry of Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, we are dealing with a multi-strategy approach because we know we cannot fix this problem with just the Ministry of Finance. We need efforts from all the different ministries, but collectively we have to combat this problem. We are dealing with a very difficult and challenging file.

With my time, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk, first of all, about dealing with the tow and storage services. As is clearly stated in Bill 15, it talks specifically about the tow and storage services, which is a huge problem.

I want to just share with the members here today that about two years ago I had a car accident, was rear-ended after leaving Queen's Park. There were three cars involved, but somehow there were five tow trucks. Okay? Five tow trucks, Mr. Speaker, all trying to get my service and to be towed. They said, "Oh, there's no cost, ma'am. There's no cost." I said, "There is a cost. Somebody's paying for this tow." So we have to be very mindful.

That's why in the proposed legislation, if passed, we will require disclosure of information to the consumer, with requirements that tow and storage services provided

to consumers be authorized, because we know that many of our constituents out there whose first language is not English are not aware about this piece. So they have to be authorized before the towing services can be provided. Deviation from the estimate payment amount, the provision of itemized invoices—again, more transparency, more information to the consumer. Insurance requirements, publication of the rates—how many times do you get a bill and you don't know what that rate is?

Then, last but not least, the bill also proposes dealing with a tow and storage consumer bill of rights, again protecting consumers, because at the end of the day, the consumer has been affected greatly by these kinds of potential problems called fraud.

That's the first part of Bill 15.

The other piece in the proposed legislation, if passed, deals specifically with the Highway Traffic Act. I cannot say enough about this particular amendment, because we know that each one of us drives Ontario highways to and from work or in our own personal lives. So if the legislation is passed, it focuses on two amendments.

First, it deals with the regulation of commercial motor vehicles and tow trucks and enforcement of the act. There will be additional fines and penalties if the legislation is passed. We heard all kinds of nightmare stories on the 400-series highways where tow truck operators, whatever the reasons, will be doing illegal activities on the road or those good operators are being intimidated. At the end of the day, if the legislation is passed, there will be additional protection—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** For the good guys.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** —for the consumers and those good operators, like my colleague from Eglinton is talking about. They will be protected. At the end of the day, one or two bad apples out there are now causing all the problems for all of us.

The other big portion of the legislation, if passed, deals specifically with the Insurance Act. This is a big section of the proposed legislation. Let me go through that first part. It deals specifically with dispute resolution, which the task force also recommended. The dispute resolution is very, very comprehensive. The proposed legislation talks about eliminating the office of the Financial Services Commission of Ontario under the director of arbitration. I know my colleague opposite earlier talked about how there will be many layers, many offices created because of the proposed legislation. That's not true. If the legislation is passed, they will be eliminating one of the offices in FSCO.

The other piece under dispute resolution: We're talking about allowing the Licence Appeal Tribunal, better known as LAT, to conduct hearings regarding the statutory accident benefit disputes, allowing the appeals of the LAT decisions to Divisional Court on questions of the law—so again, allowing the opportunity for residents or constituents who are appealing a decision of the Licence Appeal Tribunal.

The other piece here is that under this dispute resolution, it will limit court proceedings other than appeals to



the LAT decisions or applications to judicial review. We have heard many times—because this bill has been in the finance committee numerous times, having sat on the committee the last three years. It has been going on and on. We heard witness after witness asking us, pleading with this House to get on with the business of serving the people—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Enough talk.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Exactly what my colleague here has said. They said, “Enough is enough.” We have hearing after hearing, and there’s delay after delay. For what purpose? Certainly not helping the people who have been affected by it.

This proposed dispute resolution also allows the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to assess the insurer for the expenditures and expenses by the LAT related to these disputes. Again, there have been concerns raised. I recall hearing a couple of the witnesses to the committee—and remember, this committee travelled across the province and we consistently heard these concerns.

Again, this particular dispute resolution also talks about the various transition and regulation-making provisions governing the resolution of disputes, meaning a more timely period and limiting the period of disputes. We hear that so many of these court disputes get dragged on, and for what purpose? At the end of the day, those who are suffering because the decision is not being made or made too long are the clients, who are our constituents, and they are asking for timely responses to their hearings.

The other piece about the Insurance Act that is very, very clear—I know my colleague opposite talked about concerns raised about the prejudgment interest piece. There will be a new section under 258.3, subsection (8.1), that talks about governing the interest rates to be used. This does not apply with respect to the prejudgment interest. Again, we heard about this kind of request when we were at committee.

The other piece of the Insurance Act that will be amended, if the legislation is passed, deals with agents’ licences. I don’t know about you, but we hear so many concerns and challenges about the brokers’ licences and the different classifications. If passed, the proposed legislation will have classes of licences available, and it will govern the agents as well as the scope of practice of each licensee.

Again, it also provides some direction for the superintendent of FSCO, that he can refuse to issue a licence or revoke a licence—again, strengthening his role and also ensuring that the agents who are practising as insurance agents for auto insurance follow the letter of the law. We are very, very concerned about making sure that insurance operators, from the agents themselves, follow the letter of the law and strengthen the role of the superintendent, allowing him or her to investigate.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o’clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 23 October 2014

Jeudi 23 octobre 2014

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 23 October 2014

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 23 octobre 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 22, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / *Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** When this item of business was last debated, the member from Scarborough—Agincourt had the floor with time remaining. I see we now look to another member for further debate. The member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Good morning. I'm pleased to speak to Bill 15 today, the legislation that addresses concerns that affect every driver in Ontario: unaffordably high insurance rates and the need to get to the root causes to provide relief across the board. Speaker, there is no doubt that auto insurance premiums in this province are unbearably high; the highest in the nation, in fact. We're number one, and that is certainly nothing to boast about.

I hear it from my constituents in Kitchener—Conestoga. Simply put, driving to work, picking up the kids or heading out on the weekend is costing more every day, and many are fed up with waiting for the promised insurance reduction that this government has guaranteed them countless times. "Where is the relief," I'm asked, "Where are those reductions?" Of course, the government set itself a 15% reduction target by August 2015, and to the surprise of no one, indications point to the fact that they're behind schedule. In fact, according to the

Insurance Bureau of Canada, the 15% reduction is absolutely not doable.

Even more concerning is the fact that the finance minister continues to lead us down the garden path while IBC's own policy people have indicated that the province's own regulator doesn't even believe the repeated promise can be fulfilled. In fact, it was revealed that "In our conversations with the superintendent of insurance, he's indicated to us that no one in FSCO believes that there's 15% that's in the system (to be reduced)." FSCO doesn't even think it is achievable, and we're hearing reports that the rates may, in fact, be heading in the other direction.

Only in Ontario could a government botch things so royally on such an important issue and continue to try to make motorists believe that their rates are, in fact, headed down. We realize what is behind this. We all recall the Liberal deal to adopt a 15% auto insurance reduction plan in a calculated move to gain support for the most recent budget—I guess two budgets ago. It is a good way to stay in office, but it's an unsustainable way to reduce auto insurance rates. That's why we, as the official opposition, put forward our own plan, a sustainable and effective plan to bring down premiums for everyone, a plan I look forward to elaborating on a little later.

We've known from the outset that the NDP's demand for a 15% auto insurance premium reduction would have unintended and negative consequences. Today, despite the fact that the government is well off its reduction target, we see the consequences, in fact, taking shape.

While we may not be seeing our rates going down much, we are seeing our insurance options reduced. We see State Farm citing the current Ontario auto insurance environment as a primary reason for their decision to head for the exits. This is a company that held 11% of the auto insurance market. Meantime, we are hearing more stories in our constituency offices and across the province of more drivers being dropped by carriers, as insurance companies scramble to find savings and rid their books of even the most moderate of risks.

Is this perhaps the kind of Ontario that we want, an Ontario where motorists are left without coverage and forced to pay exorbitant increased premiums from other carriers? We're heading in the wrong direction.

There's no doubt that we can't continue down this path, and we need to turn this around. All that said, it is important to note that by all accounts, industry, stakeholders and accident victim advocates alike consider the bill we see before us today as at least a step in the right



direction. But to be clear, without amendment, there are very few significant cost savings achieved by this bill.

The key, as we have heard and reported in this House time and again, is confronting the very real, expensive and debilitating issue of insurance fraud. We need to ensure that this is front and centre of any attempt to fix what clearly is a very broken system.

In recent days, the Insurance Bureau of Canada has made clear its focus and action steps on what has become a key driver of escalating rates. Over the last five years, from 2009 to 2014, IBC reports that companies have significantly increased their spending on fraud from 150% to 350%, with one company increasing its fraud spending by 780%.

That spending has been distributed over a number of areas. For instance, almost all companies—96% of them—increased special investigation unit staff, 71% introduced new claims intake procedures, 62% developed and implemented new adjusting procedures, 75% adopted new investigative procedures, and 78% restructured their special investigation units.

Meantime, insurers are now involved in forming the Canadian National Insurance Crime Services as an industry response, to pool and analyze claims data to identify organized or premeditated fraud. I believe that is a great step for insurance companies to come together to analyze those things. They in fact recognize the challenge and are dedicating resources to deal with it. But without the government's support, they are fighting a losing battle. A majority of companies still continue to experience increases in fraudulent claims as fraudsters grow ever more sophisticated.

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Sorry about that.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Not a problem. Get the man a glass of water.

What are we talking about when we discuss insurance fraud? We're talking about situations that most don't even realize are as commonplace as they are—that is, until you become a victim yourself—staged collisions and rogue tow truck operators looking to bilk the system, while risking the safety of Ontario motorists. I'll give you a couple of scenarios, and I'm sure we've all heard the cautionary tales along these lines.

We have what's known as swoop and squat, where a swoop car suddenly speeds up and cuts off the squat car, usually driven by an innocent person—in the wrong place at the wrong time—who of course is unable to stop in time. Before the squat car can react, he rear-ends the swoop car and the insurance claim begins. That's just one example.

0910

There's also the drive-down, where the scammer appears to yield and waves to the innocent victim to proceed with a merge or lane change but, of course, as the victim merges, the perpetrator drives into the innocent driver, only later denying that they had, in fact, waved the victim on. You can see where this leads. I continue to warn motorists about that wave-through, as

you may be about to become the next victim. In fact, I have spoken to many constituents in my riding who have explained a recent accident. It is a perfect example of the drive-down.

Of course, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the oft-tried-and-true sideswipe, where the criminal collides with the side of the target vehicle, usually in a busy intersection with dual left-turn lanes. If the victim in the inner lane drifts even a little into the outer lane, the criminal intentionally causes a collision.

In cases of staged collisions, the big money starts flowing when the staged victims file claims for their injuries. While the collision may have occurred at a low speed, those involved claim for severe soft-tissue injuries that are difficult to disprove and can generate a flood of examinations and assessments.

Speaker, I haven't even mentioned the other side of these scams, involving unscrupulous tow truck drivers and body shops looking to make some quick bucks. We're talking about scenarios where a tow truck chaser being paid a referral fee by a vehicle repair shop quickly whisks your car away to their favourite dealer, which may or may not be the shop that your insurance company chooses to deal with. Before you know it, you're paying out of your own pocket for the tow and storage, and if you refuse to pay, then the repair shop can apply the Repair and Storage Liens Act and sell your vehicle to cover the fees. I can only imagine.

Now, we know that not all tow trucks are chasers and not all accidents are staged. We have insurance for a reason in this province. That's why it's important to get this right. To that end, I would like to note some of the details of the proposals we in the official opposition have brought forth to address the growing concerns. I would specifically like to thank my colleague Jeff Yurek from Elgin-Middlesex-London, who dedicated much time and effort in the last session in developing four pillars of the auto insurance action plan. I feel it's important that I repeat those:

(1) We want to encourage competition and reduce excess bureaucracy by adopting a file-and-use rate-setting process to allow companies to lower prices quicker, ensuring greater market competitiveness and encouraging a wider range of discount offerings for Ontario drivers.

(2) We've talked about reforming the dispute resolution process so that, in the event of a claims dispute, people could opt for private mediations in order to reduce wait times and costs associated with government-appointed mediators. We would also like to see the establishment of a true independent, peer-reviewed medical assessment system, a system that would standardize assessment procedures and require multiple assessments to be performed by medical professionals of the same specialization.

(3) This is the big one—we want to combat fraud. As fraud has such a debilitating effect on the insurance industry and associated rates, I think we can all understand the need to establish a special unit in the crown attorney's office to investigate and prosecute insurance fraud.

(4) Finally, we want to increase accountability by ensuring a fair, well-functioning marketplace for auto insurance by making senior insurer executives personally and financially liable for the conduct of the company.

That's where we're coming from in the official opposition. While some of this is reflected in the bill we see before us today, these are the areas we need to ensure are addressed as this bill moves forward through the committee process.

That being said, it's important to look at exactly what the government is proposing here in Bill 15. Of course, the bill proposes to reform the dispute resolution system by removing the jurisdiction from the Financial Services Commission and transferring it to a new body called the Licence Appeal Tribunal under the Minister of the Attorney General. As there is no mandate for the new dispute resolution system, we would like to see further details to be outlined before passage of the bill.

We have recommended having the option for a claimant and an insurer to use private mediators, as I mentioned earlier. This gives claimants more choice and allows them to avoid long queues in a publicly administered mediation process. Currently, there is a backlog of 16,000 cases, which increases costs on the system and prevents premiums from dropping. The bill must address the issue of why so many cases go to dispute in the first place. With lawyers on both sides taking issue with this part of the bill, this will be something that has to be addressed in committee.

Section 2 of the bill proposes to align prejudgment interest rates on damages to the market rather than the fixed 5%. Prior to 1989, we had a situation where the going interest rate was higher than 5%. Now that interest rates are lower than 5%, interest on non-pecuniary damages is grossly disproportionate to actual interest and can result in vast overpayment, potentially resulting in higher premiums as a ripple effect. I feel tying interest rates to the market will boost sustainability and in turn reduce premiums through a system that both insurers and customers can agree on.

Section 3 suggests issuing licences for health care providers that provide services to auto accident victims as a way to cut down on fraud. This was an issue addressed by the anti-fraud task force report back in November 2012. In the PC auto insurance action plan, we took their suggestions and called for better utilization of the Health Claims for Auto Insurance electronic billing system. We feel there is an opportunity to leverage what is already in place to provide oversight without additional bureaucracy. All health clinics should have a designated manager to bill insurers through the HCAI electronic billing system. With the ability to track activity, you can identify if there are abnormal billing practices due to fraudulent activity, and the individual health professional's licence will be on the line should they have improper billing or behave improperly. I think that's important.

Section 4 allows for greater clarity when issuing, renewing, revoking or suspending licences to insurance agents and adjusters, and we have no concerns with this section.

The final section reduces unreasonable storage costs for vehicles damaged in motor vehicle collisions which will help cut down on fraud and treat consumers more fairly when it comes to storage rates. As I had mentioned earlier, I had a bit of a fender-bender coming in on the QEW last winter, and it was only a matter of seconds before tow truck drivers all clamoured to the scene. I will say that a few of them were very generous in helping with traffic, to clear vehicles off to the side of the road, which was extremely safe, before the emergency responders arrived on the scene.

But as I had mentioned, there are some of these tow truck operators who are bringing your vehicle back to a shop of their liking, and it is extremely difficult to get your car out of the shop. We have obviously identified that there is an issue here for storage when their car has been taken by a tow truck company and the owner can have no knowledge of who actually has possession of their vehicle. It often takes hours or days just to locate where, in fact, your vehicle has gone. When you do, the rates for storage can be excessively high, especially if you are not opting to repair your vehicle at their shop. Of course, the current system requires the owner to be notified by 60 days. This is unfair and takes advantage of accident victims who could have been in the hospital unaware that there are costs accumulating. So again, reform in this area is something I think we can all support.

0920

Speaker, in conclusion, I have said that this, of course, is a step in the right direction for reducing auto insurance rates. It has certainly been a long journey for these reforms. I know that in each election, especially the last and the one before that, insurance rates were something that were talked about a lot. It was predominantly the major issue that allowed the government to perhaps survive in the 2013 budget—with the NDP's support, of course.

We've heard from stakeholders along the way, advocates for accident victims and, in fact, the towing industry, who do still have some concerns about this bill. I feel it's vital that we open our ears and listen to those concerns from those who deal with these issues each and every day on the front lines, and see where improvements can be made.

I want to make special mention of Kitchener-Waterloo and the riding of Kitchener-Conestoga. We have a very active insurance industry within the region. In fact, some of our largest employers within the region of Waterloo are insurance companies, and we can't forget our insurance brokers, who provide front-line support for those who, unfortunately, have to deal with accidents, whether it be home or auto. We want to thank them for everything they do in our communities, especially within the region of Waterloo. Some of our premier insurance companies employ thousands and thousands of people and are extremely great corporate citizens within the region, so I want to thank them.

In conclusion, as I had mentioned, there will be some amendments that need to be made before, I believe, we



are able to support this bill entirely. I look forward to seeing some of those issues addressed in committee. I do hope that they look back to the plan that, again, my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Jeff Yurek, put together, part of the PC action plan on combating insurance fraud especially, and incorporate those into the suggestions of the bill going forward so that we can move forward and tackle this ever-important issue that really stems from border to border throughout the province of Ontario. Thank you, Speaker, for the time today. I'll leave it at that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I thought the presentation made by the honourable member was actually fairly well done, in the sense that it spoke to the actual issues. For that, I commend him.

However, I think the spirit of what the government is trying to do in this legislation is to try to bring the 15% reduction to fruition. We understand that, but this bill, quite frankly, gives auto insurers far more than what they need. There is already enough money in the system, with all of the gifts that the government has given the insurance companies when it comes to previous changes to the act, that allow them to have savings of over \$2.5 billion—certainly, to God, they can find the 15% savings in this.

What we're doing with this bill, and where I depart from the honourable member's comments, is we're giving away things to insurance companies that at the end of the day are going to take away rights from accident victims: the ability to deal, for example, with the issue of interest on a settlement. Currently, if a settlement takes, let's say, six or seven years, you get 5% on your money. What ends up happening—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you. Somebody pointed out that there's no stay in my collar. Well, I'm going to stay around here just like that. How is that?

Anyway, the point is that the insurance companies currently have to pay 5% on the settlement if, let's say, the settlement is five or six or seven years down the road. That is being very, very much reduced by way of this legislation. That is a give to the insurance companies, but nonetheless, if a person had got their settlement at the beginning they would have got at least 5% and they would have put it into the market. What you end up doing is giving the insurance companies yet another break, rather than giving that break directly to the consumer.

There are a number of other points in this legislation that my colleague the member from Kenora–Rainy River will raise in debate. I just want to say that we are the ones who pushed for the 15% reduction in auto insurance rates to drivers. That is the goal, but this particular legislation is more a gift to the insurance companies than it is to the consumer.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I am so delighted to hear that the official opposition agrees that Bill 15 goes a long way to addressing concerns that Ontario consumers have with regard to insurance.

The government, of course, is committed to keeping the auto insurance industry and system fair and affordable for the more than nine million drivers in Ontario. I can recall, from my years working in consumer advocacy, that fair and affordable automobile insurance was one of the main issues that was raised time and time again, and it was our pleasure to be able to work with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and brokers' associations to make the system more fair and equitable.

Bill 15 will continue to reduce claim costs and uncertainty in the auto insurance system, and it will facilitate further rate reductions. Bill 15, as I said in the House the other day, will also reduce fraud, which will impact on the reduction of rates.

We all know that fraud and abuse of the system increase claim costs and lead to higher rates for drivers. In fact, research conducted has estimated that auto insurance fraud cost Ontario consumers between \$770 million and \$1.6 billion in 2010. That needs to be stopped.

Bill 15 continues the government's work to combat auto insurance fraud. It's going to transform the auto insurance dispute resolution system. It's going to introduce provincial regulation of the vehicle towing industry. It's going to modernize insurance agent and adjuster disciplinary hearings. It's going to provide authority to address abusive vehicle storage issues identified by the task force. I know that these are issues that are important to my constituents.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I want to thank my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga for all of his research into this topic, which I think is of utmost importance to all of us.

I actually did my own research last year. I was doing some work for Rogers cable TV, and I had two representatives of the Insurance Bureau of Canada as guests. They laughed when I said to them that my riding of Thornhill has been told for years that we are the worst drivers in the province and that's why we have the highest insurance rates. I guess we all believed them, and we just took it. We had no choice. We had to pay the highest insurance rates.

It turned out that there was a huge ring of insurance fraud that was operating out of Vaughan, and 15 people were arrested last year. It was a very long investigation. It was exactly what the member from Kitchener–Conestoga mentioned. It's set up; it's cars that are in accidents every week. There doesn't seem to be a system to track these cars that are in accidents. They're put together with some foam and a bit of paint, and then they send them out on the road to stage another collision.

Why aren't we having some kind of registry of serial numbers of cars and following the cars that are in multiple collisions where other cars are found to be at fault? Why aren't we monitoring and checking up somehow on

the notes of doctors and physiotherapists who supposedly are giving treatments, unbeknownst to them? Anybody can go to a print shop now and print up very official-looking letterhead or prescription pads.

We have to do better. It's not enough to just say, "Let's arbitrarily cut insurance by 10%, 15%." Why don't we just cut it by 50% while we're at it? What we have to do is reduce the things that are driving up the cost of insurance.

We don't just look at our budget for our family and say, "Let's just cut the food budget in half." We have to do it smart. What we're looking at now, thanks to the research from the member, are ways to cut it down.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to join the debate here this morning. We did debate the bill at length last night. I listened to my colleague, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who has been a champion on this issue not only for constituents in his riding but certainly for drivers across the province. He very eloquently and effectively dissected what we see, as New Democrats, as glaring inadequacies in this bill. He pointed back and gave us a chronology.

Members of the House will remember that in 2010, the government initiated some pretty heavy changes to the insurance industry that resulted in a 50% reduction in statutory accident benefit costs and, in some cases, a 70% reduction in those costs to insurance companies.

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As a direct result of those changes, those insurance corporations in the province of Ontario benefited to the tune of \$2 billion a year in extra profit. Now, you would think that in our free market system, in our capitalistic type system, that if a company is making more money hand over fist, record profits, then some of those profits would be turned back to the consumer in the way of price reduction or cost reduction in a competitive marketplace. But that didn't happen. It boggles the mind. In fact, in many areas of the province, even with those changes, auto insurance rates have increased.

What we see in this bill is another gift, and we have a serious problem right in the title of the bill, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates. It should be retitled "It's a great day to be an insurance company in the province of Ontario because you are going to make record profits," potentially. That's what we see as the effect of this bill. There is a high emphasis on fraud in this bill, and we definitely have to look at the root causes of fraud. Let's look at greed inherent in the insurance system and ensure that there is some fairness. It is your responsibility as regulators.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now refer back to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I would like to thank those who chimed in for a couple of minutes in response to my 20 minutes on Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act: the member from Timmins–James Bay, the new member from Newmarket–

Aurora, my colleague from Thornhill and, finally, my southwestern friend, down the road, from Essex. Thank you very much.

I think we hear fraud talked about a lot, clearly, each and every day when we think of automobile insurance. There are just too many stories out there that we've all heard about. Whether they're legitimate accidents or there is a fraudulent motive behind them, we have to get to the root of those problems.

Of course, Ontarians need auto insurance, and they expect that it's there for them when they need it the most for a variety of reasons. But I do think it's important to go back and talk about the aspects that my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London and our party put forward last session to remind the government that they're important to perhaps adopt as they move forward. We've talked about encouraging competition, reducing excess bureaucracy by developing a file-and-use rate-setting process that will allow companies to lower prices quicker, really ensuring greater market competitiveness, and encouraging a wider range of discount offerings for Ontario drivers.

We've talked about reforming the dispute resolution process so that, in the event of a claims dispute, people could opt for private mediation in order to reduce wait times. Of course, combating fraud is one of the biggest aspects of it, because it has such a debilitating effect on insurance industry rates. I think we all understand the need to establish a special unit in the crown attorney's office to investigate and prosecute fraud.

I'll leave it at that, Speaker, and I look forward to the comments from the rest of my colleagues.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Kenora–Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to say good morning to you as well as the members of this House and the folks who are watching from home. Today we're talking about a very important topic, and that is auto insurance rates, which is something that acutely affects the folks who live in my riding of Kenora–Rainy River.

I don't think there's any question that we need to make some significant reforms to auto insurance across the province. People are stretched to the max, and they can't afford the essentials. Many people are struggling just to find jobs and to stay afloat. Certainly, we see that in Kenora–Rainy River. Auto insurance rates are another cost that people are concerned about because the premiums keep escalating, and yet insurance is mandatory if people need to drive. In the north, of course, we have to drive. We don't have the luxury of public transportation. That's something I've talked about a fair bit since being elected.

The other point is that we've seen a fairly significant downturn in our economy in the northwest. That has put many people in the unenviable position of needing to travel for work. We're seeing a lot of people who are doing the regular commute to Alberta. To do that, of course, means that they have to pay for all the expenses



that go along with it, everything from a driver's licence, vehicle payments, maintenance, snow tires—which, of course, is a reality in the north—gasoline and what we're talking about today: auto insurance. It is no wonder that in 2013, 90% of the respondents to my annual budget survey said that lower auto insurance premiums are either a high or an extremely high priority for them in their everyday lives.

People are also struggling to understand why rates are so high. In 2010, which has already been mentioned this morning, this government made changes that benefited the auto insurance industry greatly, where premiums increased and accident benefits were slashed. In fact, benefits were essentially halved. I'll never forget the volume of people who came forward to the constituency office with their previous and current years' coverage details in hand, asking, "How can this be? How can it be that our benefits are essentially halved yet we are paying more? How could it possibly be allowed to happen?" I recall even then how people were struggling to stay afloat. The response from the government was, of course, that these changes would be in turn passed down to consumers and that they would see substantial savings.

In this House, when we've debated this bill previously, I also mentioned the fact that I was in, I guess you could say, possibly the wrong place at the wrong time and was involved in a head-on collision just outside my house on the Trans-Canada Highway. It was on or about August 26, 2010. I didn't really, at that time, know the significance of that, but when I went to seek some aftercare, going to see the chiropractor and these kinds of things, there was a lot of concern that my treating specialists were giving me, because they said that if I would have had my accident four days later, I wouldn't have been entitled to anywhere near the same benefits as just being hit those four days prior.

Again, with all those folks who have come into the office, we have seen that those changes have not been passed on to consumers. That argument, that by making some of those changes that those savings would be passed on to consumers, sounds a little like what we're talking about today. Here we are four years later, talking about making some significant changes, and we're told that if consumers kind of tighten their belts and kind of take their lumps, we'll see that translate into premiums. But I'm not so sure. I'm not so convinced, because we have heard this before and it hasn't translated into those savings. We never did see those other savings materialize.

Ontarians are expecting this government to lower auto insurance premiums as they promised in their 2013 budget. This was a big reason why I chose to support the 2013 budget, but this government has failed to deliver those changes as promised. Just bringing back a little bit of a reminder to folks: That's one of the big reasons why I decided that I couldn't support the 2014 budget, because in 2013, we carefully negotiated a very small list of things—about five things. Then we flash forward a year later and we didn't see any action on those five simple, very-easy-to-implement things. So I didn't have

any confidence at that point that this government would then be able to reasonably implement the 70-plus promises that were in this 2014 budget.

The fact is that costs need to go down, but the question is, are these proposed changes the answer? I think in order to really assess that, we need to look at some of the changes that this government seeks. I'm going to look at three particular changes.

The first is with respect to tow and storage services. My concern with this aspect is that it leaves so much up to regulation. I just wanted to reference the part of the explanatory note that I'm referring to. There are some changes that are being made to the Highway Traffic Act. It reads, "The Highway Traffic Act is amended in two main areas: the regulation of commercial motor vehicles and tow trucks and enforcement of the act generally by the addition of administrative penalties.

"In respect of commercial motor vehicles, the act is amended as follows"—I'm just going to read two points. The first is "to repeal the definition of 'commercial motor vehicle' in subsection 16(1) of the act and replace it with the authority to define the term by regulation." Then if you flip the page, point 5: "To prohibit drivers and other persons in charge of tow trucks from engaging in activities prescribed by regulation."

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Here we are, debating whether we are going to agree to something in principle, but we don't know the details. To me, that's concerning. Further to that, it goes on to talk about general enforcement and some of the penalties, which are not to exceed \$20,000. This is significant.

I don't think that this type of language and this type of approach bodes well for a government that has been anything but transparent. We've seen Ornge, we've seen eHealth, the gas plants, and now the Pan Am Games, and some of the secrecy around the privatization of our public assets like Hydro One, OPG and the LCBO.

I find it—and I'm sure many Ontarians find it—a little difficult to trust that this government will go into the backrooms to supplement the bill with regulations that will actually help the people of this province.

If anything, I believe that we need to keep a bright light shining on every nook and cranny of this government. Just approving something carte blanche, with a very rough skeletal frame, is not the way to go.

The second piece I wanted to review is dispute resolutions, especially the statutory accident benefits.

Ontario has a hybrid insurance system that accommodates both tort—which is negligence, pain and suffering—and no-fault claims, such as accident benefits, home care and income replacement, among others.

Some cases have both a tort and a no-fault component. Prohibiting the court system as an option for all disputes with a no-fault component means that a claimant with both a tort and a no-fault case will have to appear in court and in front of a tribunal separately. This change essentially removes the court option as an avenue of appeal on the no-fault side. This is confusing, and it's expensive for the victim, who will have to pay the added costs of

having a representative represent them when it comes to the two different levels. If anything, we should be wanting to streamline some of these changes and make it easier for accident victims to pursue their rights. This is, as I see it, very much a step backwards.

The third aspect that I wanted to look at in terms of this bill is prejudgment interest and some of the changes around that. Prejudgment interest is the amount of interest an insurance company needs to pay, based on the length of time it takes from the incident to the resolution. It is presently set at 5% of whatever the total is determined to be for pain and suffering. This amount can be significant for insurance companies, and it acts as a deterrent to dragging on a settlement.

Presently, a pain-and-suffering award of, say, \$50,000 that has been delayed by three years would result in an additional \$7,500 being paid in interest to the victim. Under these proposed changes, however, that same pain-and-suffering award of \$50,000 that has been delayed by three years would only be subject to a prejudgment interest rate of 1.3%. That would translate to about \$1,950, so it's going from 5% down to 1.3%.

I would say it's in everyone's best interest to resolve these things quickly but, really, for the victim of an accident, it's through no fault of their own that they find themselves in these situations. We need to make sure that we have timely compensation for them. It really doesn't encourage insurance companies to settle within a reasonable amount of time, and it's really not fair for accident victims.

In summary of some of the things that I've talked about, there's no doubt that we need to bring insurance premiums down in the province of Ontario. Not only do they need to be reduced, but I believe they need to be reduced in favour of the consumer. As mentioned, 90% of my constituents in Kenora-Rainy River have identified lower auto insurance premiums as a high or extremely high priority for them.

The other point that needs to be made is that auto insurance is a mandatory service. It's not a luxury add-on that drivers can opt in to purchase. I believe, consequently, that we have an obligation to provide this essential service in a manner that is as lean as possible with as little overhead and superfluous charges as possible.

The purpose of auto insurance should be to provide coverage if the worst happens, not line the pockets or pad the wallets of folks in the insurance industry. That's where I really have to take issue with the previous speaker, the member from the Conservative caucus, arguing that companies are leaving Ontario in droves. I think this legislation, as it is currently proposed, largely benefits the auto insurance industry. Is the auto insurance industry upset about the previously negotiated 15% reduction? I imagine they are. Are they doing all they can to bolster their profits? Sure. I would argue that that's the nature of business. But make no mistake: The industry is not poor. I would argue that those who are poor or struggling to get by are essentially the people of this province who are struggling already to make ends meet. They are the ones

who deserve our attention right now. They are simply asking for some balance to the system—balance—and I think that's fair.

In 2010, as I mentioned, there were substantial changes made on the part of this government to assist the auto insurance industry in reducing their costs, but despite changes to reduce costs, these savings have not been passed on to consumers. It has been reported that there was only one company that passed on these savings to their consumers. So when it comes to these changes, which are largely seen to benefit the auto insurance industry, people are understandably skeptical. Are these changes even going to result in any substantial savings for consumers?

However, it needs to be said that reducing auto insurance fraud is always an important target. It's something that we should be striving towards.

The problem with the proposed changes in this bill—*Interruption.*

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** It seems that my House leader is very important this morning.

To continue on, the problem with the changes in this bill is that they aren't balanced or fair for consumers. Whether it is reducing the prejudgment interest rate or increasing legal representation costs by forcing victims to bring forward tort and no-fault claims separately through a court and tribunal and removing some of their appeal options, it's not positive for consumers. Some of these points, as I mentioned, are so vague that we don't know what the government plans to do with them, such as making unspecified changes to the commercial motor vehicle definition, imposing restrictions on CVOR certificates and some other things. I would argue that we are beyond the point of giving this government the benefit of the doubt when it comes to sketching out the details later on in the backroom.

The bottom line is that there are other ways to bring down auto insurance premiums by 15% across this province, and there are other places to squeeze. But paying for the reductions out of the pockets of accident victims is disgusting and it's wrong.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? The Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Food and Rural Affairs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** They all go together. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I had the opportunity to listen to the speech this morning on Bill 15 by my colleague from Kenora-Rainy River. I'd just like to highlight a great insurance company in the riding of Peterborough, Topping Insurance. Karan and I have had our auto insurance with them for a considerable number of years—a great family-owned company that provides wonderful service to the community of Peterborough. I do know that Topping Insurance has been working hard to decrease the auto insurance for the great constituents of Peterborough by 15%.



It's always good to have a New Democrat talk about how our policy is very effective. I just got a note here: There was an NDP candidate in the wonderful riding of Burlington, Ontario—a great community. I'm sorry; he was the Halton candidate, not Burlington. I stand corrected. He said in a tweet, "Just got my latest car insurance payment update + I'm paying \$22 less a month!" That's an interesting observation by an NDP candidate from the wonderful riding of Halton.

Here's another one. Mr. Speaker, I think this photo op took place in your riding of Scarborough—Rouge River, with the leader of the third party.

Andrea Horwath: "Have you seen a big decrease in your auto insurance rates?"

Supporter nods yes off-camera.

Horwath: "You've seen any decreases lately?"

"Yes, and I've seen substantial decreases under the Liberal program of reducing auto insurance by 15%."

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I'm told that that photo op went by very, very quickly, and the leader of the third party shuffled quickly away from that situation.

Our plan is working—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I guess if you say it enough times you start to believe it.

I would like to point out that, as I said previously, a lot of people in Thornhill were surprised to find out that their insurance rates were so high because of insurance fraud, and not only the drivers. York region police officers seemed a bit taken aback by the news as well, that there was such a level of insurance fraud. In fact, one of the officers said to me that she was a bit chagrined, she was a bit embarrassed even, because she had so many times where she came to investigate collisions where drivers said, "He just slammed on his brakes in front of me for absolutely no reason," or "They waved to me to go ahead at the stop sign, and when I started to go, they drove into me; it looks like I'm at fault, but I really am not at fault," or "They were trying to push me off the road" or whatever.

The police officer just felt that these are people who don't want to be found at fault and don't want to be ticketed, and they're making up stories. What I'm suggesting, obviously, is now that things have been investigated, we're all aware that these aren't just stories. These aren't just people trying to defend themselves. Maybe we should be looking a little closer.

As I said before, I think it starts with the cars that are in these staged collisions. Why are we not looking at why some cars are in so many collisions? It doesn't matter who the driver is; they're smart enough to change drivers, because we do tend to follow the drivers around when there are accidents. But we're not looking at the actual cars that they're driving and seeing if this car has been in multiple accidents—changing ownership, changing plates, whatever it is they have to do to keep using

the cars for these staged collisions. I think that's where our investigation has to be.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I want to thank the member from Kenora—Rainy River for her remarks about Bill 15.

We have been talking about this auto insurance issue for the three years that I have been here, and I've been listening to the members of the government say, "Well, you know what? You just need to go shop around. It's like going out and buying a new washing machine. You can get a good price if you actually go and shop around." But you know, I've done that. I have actually gone online to try to shop around, and I can tell you, there isn't very much difference in prices between any of the companies that are offering auto insurance, which is mandatory here in the province.

The Liberal government promised to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. Their target was 8% for August of this year. They haven't got there. I can tell you, in my community and many communities across this province, people have not seen a reduction in their auto insurance. Now, the Minister of Agriculture talked about somebody saying they had a \$22 reduction, but on what premium? If they had a \$22 reduction on a \$2,200 premium for the year, that's 1%, Speaker.

The issue of accident victims and the issue of actually taking away that 5% penalty will have huge negative impacts on victims. I can tell you, my next-door neighbours were in an accident about six years ago. It was six years before they actually got a settlement on that case, people who are 85 years old. Their health benefits and housekeeping benefits were all cut off after two years. They're paying out of their own pockets to keep going in their house while they're waiting for these things to actually solidify and get a payment. I think that we really need to make sure, if we're bringing forward bills, that they're actually going to benefit the victims.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm absolutely delighted once again to stand on behalf of the government's bill. There's a whole new spirit of co-operation, I'm sensing, in this House since the election, this being the second bill I've had a chance to speak to.

The member from Kenora—Rainy River had some interesting ideas that she wants to bring forward at the committee, and we look forward to hearing them. But what I continue to hear is widespread support for the general direction of the bill, from the member from Thornhill as well.

We are getting at fraud. We all recognize that fraud is an important part of why insurance premiums are higher than they should be. Every one of us has experienced a situation, I'm sure, where someone they know or they have personally been involved in a situation where there was fraud in the system.

In my own life, I was in a car with my mother, driving on the 401 in a snowstorm. We were going about 50

kilometres an hour. There was no speed violations involved; we were driving with the conditions. A car took us out. Another car came from behind and clipped the back of our vehicle.

I stood with this woman on the side of the road for over an hour and a half, waiting for tow trucks to clear out the mess. She had no problems—nothing. She wasn't injured. And I was surprised: A year and a half later, we get a frivolous lawsuit coming down, making my mother, at 86 years of age—whipping her into a frenzy for some woman who had found a lawyer who was going to go forward and go after the insurance company to see what she could get.

The cost of litigation is so high that insurance companies are recognizing that sometimes it's better just to settle. It's unfortunate that now people realize that just by putting in an application, they'll get a settlement. That is increasing the cost of writing insurance.

It's not about consumer protection measures. It's really about rooting out the fraud so that we keep the settlements down and keep our premiums down.

The notion of prejudgment interest is not meant to be a stick to force insurance companies to settle. It's meant to compensate people for the reasonable cost associated with the length of time so that if legitimate claims come forward, they will be legitimately compensated for the cost of living during that period.

Thank you for supporting this bill. The co-operation is appreciated.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Now I go to the member for Kenora—Rainy River. You have two minutes for your response.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I would like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs as well as the members from Thornhill, Welland and Beaches—East York for their comments.

I don't know that I would go as far as saying you have my widespread support or that there is necessarily widespread support in this chamber. I think there is a general agreement in this House that we do need to look at fraud, but we also need to look at a bunch of other things. We need to look at making the system more fair for everyone who is involved.

I don't believe that cutting costs for the industry is the way to achieve balance in the system. I believe very much that we've been there, and we've done that. We've seen those efforts on the part of this government in 2010, and we've seen how those haven't translated into savings.

With regard to the member from Beaches—East York's comments about how the prejudgment interest isn't intended to be a stick to be used against the insurance companies, that it's meant to compensate people for their legitimately lost income if this had been settled faster, I would argue that it's already an un-level playing field. Right? Insurance companies have very, very deep pockets. They have all sorts of lawyers on staff. That's what they do. This is like a big part of their business. I think there needs to be some kind of an incentive to wrap this stuff up quickly. Having seen first-hand some of these

accident victims who have struggled with going long periods of time without being paid, I would just say that we have to do that.

I look forward to this going to committee to examine this issue fully and to broaden the range of some of the options that we pursue in terms of restoring balance to this system.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Two summers ago, I had the interesting task, after finishing the consideration of the government's first budget in its minority government, of then taking the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on a bit of a cross-province tour to listen to people talk about auto insurance. One of the interesting parts wasn't so much who came as who didn't. Who didn't come were any of the insurance companies.

While we learned an awful lot about how to skew the system in favour of one party or another, one of the parties who seemed to be very satisfied with the status quo was the actual insurance companies. I thought it was unforgivable then, and I consider it to be unforgivable today.

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Some of the things we found out, at the time, that the province has been trying to incorporate into legislation are worth bringing back and mentioning here. The province would probably have been a lot further along in incorporating some of these badly needed changes into legislation had the Conservatives and the New Democrats not stalled and filibustered and, for that matter, provoked an election this spring—although I have no trouble with the outcome, Speaker. I really do think that the people of Ontario, when they had a chance to pronounce judgment on the performance of the government, on all of its files, including this insurance file, said, "We like the direction that you're going. For heaven's sake, keep it up."

Let's talk a little about some of the things that we found out, which the province has been trying to fix, and that we need all-party consent to get fixed. For example, Speaker, one of the problems we face right now is that it's very possible to take a car that has been junked and get it back on the road. One of the ways is, you simply don't fix it. You just wire the thing together and a car that's still mechanically unsound can often be back on the road within a day or two. That's wrong. It's those types of cars that are driving our insurance premiums up.

One of the other things is that when you bring in your car, your insurance company is going to say, "I'm going to approve fixing your car, but you're not going to be able to use parts from the original equipment manufacturer. You've got to use off-brand parts," or "You've got to use reconditioned parts." That's going to put a car back on the road that's very likely to have a mechanical failure not that far along. That's wrong. As a province, we have to address that issue. If it is a car going back on the road after having been fixed, particularly after a motor vehicle accident, it has to go on the road with proper parts. It can't go on the road with parts that are made by a less-



than-reputable manufacturer and that are likely to fail again. We need the help of both opposition parties to get measures like that passed.

Some of the other problems: some of the bogus accident insurance claims. I remember hosting one of the larger insurance underwriters in my office. They were talking about this, and I cut them short and said, "As the insurance industry, how many of these bogus clinics have you guys shut down this year?" After a long pause, it was, "Well, er, um, actually, none." Let's give them some credit. A year later when they came back to see me, I said, "How many of these clinics have you shut down?" and they actually had a narrative to show the litigation that they had begun against some of the bogus accident and physio clinics. I thought, now they've got some credibility; now we're seeing what the industry is doing.

This is a two-way street. This is not just the government saying, "We've got to fix this." We, the province of Ontario, don't have public auto insurance. We feel this need is best served by the private sector, and so far, I'm still okay with that. I don't think that the taxpayer needs to replicate an entire insurance industry and spend several billion dollars on setting it up before we write the first insurance premium. I still think that's not the right way to go. I still think the private sector can do a better job.

However, if you really want to see a nice system of executive salaries and bonuses, have a look at the ones in the insurance companies. They do very well, thank you.

We've been after the insurance companies to put some teeth into their actions and to go after the bad actors, to go after the body shops that do shoddy work, to go after the phony accident claims, not just to pay them off. Paying them off means that they take the cost of fraud, they mark it up and they pass it directly on to you. That's not acceptable. That's part of what our Ministry of Finance has been working with the auto insurance industry to get down. We can no longer have them shrug their shoulders and accept fraud as a cost of doing business, mark it up, add on a profit component and pass it along to you in the form of higher premiums. That's not acceptable at all. We need the assistance of both the Conservatives and the New Democrats to get strong, assertive measures passed to make sure that stops happening.

Let's go on with some of the things that continue to happen, things I found out in our deliberations two years ago and things I still get visits from some of the participants in the industry to talk about: tow truck drivers who will haul a car to a repair facility—in this House—that's paying them off. It's not acceptable. We need some real teeth in legislation that deals with the towing industry. There are a lot of good people in the towing industry. I remember having a neighbour who was a tow truck driver, and he told me what practices he felt were objectionable within that industry.

So we cannot have tow truck drivers deciding that they're going to become part of it and just say, "Why don't I get mine, too?" As a tow truck driver, you're there to provide a service, and that's to take a vehicle that is broken down or been in an accident to the repair

facility of the driver's choice, and to bring it to a repair facility that is going to look after that car and that driver at their choice, not yours.

The other thing: I had a visitor to my office, a lawyer, and he said, "Here's one of the things that we're finding. A lot of ads that you see on radio and on television and a lot of the billboards and print ads talk about auto accident insurance injury claims. Well, who do you think is paying for all of those ads? You are. You're paying for them in the form of higher insurance premiums."

How about the practice that this lawyer alleged happens, in which the law firm has an honorarium if you're going to refer—perhaps as a hospital admitting nurse or a surgeon—a case to them to handle? Now, who do you think is paying for that? You are, in the form of higher insurance premiums. We need the help of the New Democrats and the Conservatives to get to the bottom of that and to make sure that that doesn't happen, because that can take money off of your insurance policy.

Distracted driving is something that the police have talked to me about. Here's something that I didn't know: To the insurance companies, a distracted driving conviction can affect your insurance rates almost as much, if not as much, as a driving-while-impaired conviction. So I actually have to just sort of break my train of thought to say to everybody in Ontario: Take the cellphone and either put on a Bluetooth headset, or if you have a car with Bluetooth, learn how to use it, but don't operate the thing with your hands.

I have listened to police officers say that they're trying to be sensible in this because it's now an expensive fine and it's now three demerit points; they're reluctant to take somebody and say, "All right, this is going to cost you a lot of money. It's going to put three demerit points on your record, and when your insurance company discovers that this is what you've been fined for, you're going to get whacked with a much higher insurance premium." That's one that's completely, absolutely preventable. I have to ask people in Ontario, if you have to have your cellphone with you in the car—put the thing in, charge it up—that's great, but we shouldn't be using them in the car. That includes when you're stopped at a traffic light. That includes the time that you're stopped at a traffic light. Don't use the thing in the car. It is going to cost you money.

Another of the things that we need the help of the opposition for, to pass legislation with teeth to get out of the system and to address, would be getting the vehicle insurance numbers of junk cars reinstated—putting reconditioned but properly junked cars back on the road. There's a whole host of ways that you can do this, and we need the co-operation of the opposition to pass legislation with teeth to make sure that this doesn't happen anymore.

Another way that they play games is to have a minor collision, one that's easily repairable. The insurance company will just write off the car. That's the opposite problem. First, there's the problem of taking a car that shouldn't be on the road—and discovering that within days it's back on the road; another that hits you in the

form of higher premiums would be taking a car that is easily repairable and writing off a car that should be repaired and put back on the road, which is, again, a much larger cost to the insurance company, which is marked up and passed along to you in the form of higher premiums—absolutely, positively wrong and indefensible.

While the province claims the rates are down by 3% or so—the numbers from FSCO—all of us in our constituency offices, of course, have had people who have come in and said, “Well, actually, my insurance premiums are higher.” I can understand that, because during July, August and September, I had to pay my home insurance, higher; my other half’s car insurance, the same; and my car insurance, the same. That’s now the Travelers insurance company; it used to be the Dominion of Canada.

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I called up my insurance company and said, “Where’s my discount? I should actually have a discount. I haven’t moved. I haven’t moved, and I haven’t been in an accident.”

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Bob, bully them to death. Bully them.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Exactly. Don’t heckle me, because you’re on my side.

I said, “So how does it come to pass, if insurance premiums should be going down, that my insurance premiums have not gone down?”

I discovered that what they do is they just change the classification for the postal code in which you live. They reclassify the postal code in which you live, and they say, “Well, your classification is up, but your rates are down, so the net effect to you is the same.” Oh, come on.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I think I’m touching a responsive chord here.

While the province can do a lot of things in the way of legislative changes—and I’m going to come back to my theme—we need the help of our colleagues. In this, we’re all on the same side. We’re all on the side of the person who pays those auto insurance premiums. That’s the person whose interests all three parties here have to keep paramount.

We’ve got to keep these bills moving through committee. We’ve got to get them passed, we’ve got to get them enacted, and we’ve got to put some teeth into them. We’ve got to make sure, when that legislation is enacted, that the insurance companies actually obey the law and bring our premiums down, and that they don’t recapture them in the form of higher executive compensation and other assorted little games that they play.

Let me come back to the bill. Some of the rate changes for individual drivers, however, do vary, and let’s talk about some of the factors that determine what premium you may pay.

Your driving record does matter. Sometimes people have come to us and they’ve said, “My premiums went up.” It turns out, as you’ve explored it with some extra questioning, that in fact their driving record changed. In other words, they had some convictions. If you’ve got a record of convictions, you can expect your insurance policy premiums to rise.

It’s worth shopping around at the time that your premiums are up. It’s worth actually finding an insurance company that is going to give you accident forgiveness on the first incident. That means that the first time you’re in an accident—which can happen. You can have a spotless record for years or decades, and you end up in a fender-bender if you hit a patch of ice or a patch of wet road. That doesn’t make you a bad driver.

We need the insurance companies to be able to take into account the fact that good drivers—people with impeccable records for many years or many decades—can hit a patch of ice, can hit a wet road, can hit something that will cause a minor fender-bender. It shouldn’t send your policy premiums through the roof. Our measures with regard to insurance have to make sure that insurance companies have a reasonableness test when it comes to adjusting premiums.

Your premiums vary with the type of car that you drive, so it’s reasonable to assume that if you get a new car, there’s likely to be a premium change. If you are upgrading the value of your car, you’re likely to see a higher premium. If you’re going from driving a top-end car to a more economical car, you’re also likely to see a decrease in your premiums, and that’s where it also pays to shop around.

It does depend on where you live, and this is something that I disagree with. I don’t think it should depend on where you personally live. If there’s a statistically higher incidence of fraud in the area where you live or the postal code where you live, that shouldn’t penalize a good driver. I have never, ever accepted that argument, and I never will.

I remember having a discussion with one of the insurance brokers out in Streetsville, where we were talking about that. I said, “I had a public meeting the other day. There were about 50 people at it, and what they were saying to me at the meeting was that if you’re a new Canadian and you live in Brampton, you can’t find an insurance carrier that’s willing to insure you.”

He laughed and said, “Bob, it’s not if you’re a new Canadian. They don’t want to insure anybody in Brampton.” I said, “Why?” He said, “It’s because of the incidence of fraud.”

I said, “So how should that penalize someone who lives in Brampton, who has driven responsibly and obeyed the law and has a spotless record? Owing to where they live, they can’t find an insurance carrier to insure them?”

Speaker, I think have you a message for us.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I’d like to introduce a number of guests I have here today. We have Sandra Gib-



bons. Judy Legg is here. We have George Habib, president and CEO of the Ontario Lung Association. Andrea Stevens Lavigne, Chris Yaccato, John Chenery and Carole Madeley are all from the lung association.

We also have Noah Farber, who was here earlier and has left, from the Asthma Society of Canada, as we debate Ryan's Law this afternoon.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** It is my pleasure to introduce in the east members' gallery today Debbie Bolter, who is a constituent of mine in Peterborough, and at a silent auction, bid on lunch with an MPP. We certainly welcome her to Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to introduce former MPP Rob Milligan from Northumberland-Quinte West. He's bringing his school here to Queen's Park today, if they're not already in the gallery, and I'd like to welcome him back to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On behalf of my colleague from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, it's my pleasure to recognize today's page captain, Lily-Anne Villemaire. Her mother, Judy Wilcox, will be in the members' gallery this morning. I hope members join me in greeting them.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On behalf of my colleague, the MPP for Bramalea-Gore-Malton, I'd like to introduce today's page captain, Jagmeet Mangat, and his mother, Kulbir Singh, and his brother Ranbir Mangat. They'll be in the members' gallery. Welcome.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to introduce constituents of mine who are here for lunch with me today and great supporters: Phil LeBruyne and Susan Robillard.

#### NATHAN CIRILLO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek on a point of order.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you.

We are all deeply saddened by the tragic loss yesterday of Corporal Nathan Cirillo of Hamilton's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders regiment, who was one of my constituents. We are grateful for the brave men and women, like Corporal Cirillo, who give their lives in service to our country, something we share in common with all Ontarians.

I am requesting unanimous consent to have a book of condolence placed in the main lobby of the Legislative Building so that we and other Ontarians can pay our respects to this brave young father.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek is seeking unanimous consent to put a book of condolence in the main lobby. Do we agree? Agreed.

I thank the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

#### SHOOTINGS IN OTTAWA

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Nepean-Carleton on a point of order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

I'd like to start today's question period, as a member of provincial Parliament from the nation's capital, by giving our condolences as an assembly to the Canadian Forces soldier who was killed yesterday guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a memorial in itself.

I'd like to thank our federal parliamentarians for showing the great unity that we had in our nation yesterday, and the Ottawa Police forces, our RCMP and the guards at Parliament Hill, our sacred seat of democracy.

There are several of us here from the nation's capital and we are reminded that we are, in Ottawa, the guardians of every Canadian's second hometown. Yesterday was quite a disturbing day. But despite our political colours here and where we came from in the rest of the province, our colleagues stood united here.

I would especially like to say thank you to the Premier and the two leaders of the official opposition for showing great unity yesterday for our colleagues. Your genuine kindness and concern for us with family and friends and constituents in the nation's capital meant more to us than you will ever know.

To the staff of the Legislative Assembly who carried on, to the guards here and to our Sergeant-at-Arms and our Speaker, I want to say thank you to you as well. It was a tremendous show of respect.

A lot of us wanted to be at home yesterday. We couldn't be. But if there was a place that we could be, it was right here with 106 other people who wanted to stand up for democracy and the values that we cherish, like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and even freedom of the press.

Ladies and gentlemen, with that in mind, I would like us today to join with our federal colleagues and start our day by singing O Canada. I seek unanimous consent for that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nepean-Carleton is seeking unanimous consent to sing O Canada. Do we agree? Please rise.

*Singing of O Canada.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup. It is now time for question period.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Monte Naughton:** My question this morning is for the Premier and is regarding the security situation here in our province.

Premier, the tragic events yesterday morning in Ottawa shook our country. In the second brutal and violent act this week, we have seen another of Canada's finest brutally murdered and we have seen our enemy strike out at the heart of our democracy and of our freedom.

Last night, my family, like many others across the province, gave thanks to the ceremonial guard at the

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and all it stands for, and we gave thanks to the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Commons as well.

Premier, can you please update our assembly on the efforts you are undertaking to work with all levels of government to ensure the safety and security of Ontario residents?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I just want to reinforce what has already been said and to assure the House that the most important priority for our government and for all the members here is the safety and security of all Ontarians.

We send our thoughts and prayers to the family of the Canadian Forces reservist from Hamilton who lost his life yesterday, and to all of the people who were injured and their friends and families.

I also want to thank the members on all sides of the House for their unity yesterday in coming together.

To the question of what is being done at this point, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has reached out to his counterpart, Minister Steven Blaney, to the chief of Ottawa police, Charles Bordeleau, and to Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson to offer assistance. We want Ontarians to know that our police and our paramedics and firefighters are trained and are prepared for any eventuality.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you very much, Premier. We all hugged our children a little tighter and a little longer last night as we were reminded of the daily risks undertaken by those who serve and by those who wear Her Majesty's uniform.

We also know, as Prime Minister Harper said, that Canada will never be intimidated and that attacks like this will do nothing but strengthen our resolve to redouble our efforts.

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Here at Queen's Park, we're thankful for the help and assistance of the Legislative Security Service; our own Sergeant-at-Arms, Dennis Clark; the Ontario Provincial Police and, of course, the Toronto Police Service.

Premier, can you please let us know if you are considering changes to strengthen security here at Queen's Park as a result of the terrorism we witnessed yesterday in our nation's capital?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Before I speak about the precinct here, I just want to also add that CSIS and the RCMP are sharing information with the OPP and with local police forces, and our local forces are working together. One of the most important things that the minister and I spoke about with the RCMP and the OPP yesterday was the co-ordination of efforts. That is ongoing, and it is important that every member in this House know that local police forces are also part of that network.

In terms of Queen's Park, I want to take this opportunity to thank our security, both within Queen's Park and throughout the whole precinct. Their professionalism and dedication is second to none, and we're very, very,

very grateful. I have every confidence in the abilities of the Legislative Security Service, and I certainly will leave it to the security services to make decisions about what provisions need to be made here at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will offer a little clarity that the Premier is correct: It's the responsibility of the Speaker, as selected by the members, to take care of the security within the Legislature. We are consistently and ongoingly working with the Sergeant-at-Arms and the senior staff to ensure the safety and security of not just the members but all the people in this building, and we will keep you updated.

Supplementary, please.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and back to the Premier. There can be no doubt that yesterday's attack was a direct strike at our democracy and at our freedom. As Canadians, we reject these tactics as cowardly. We pledge to remember and hold dear the life of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, and we pledge to never be intimidated.

Of course, Canada is not immune from these types of attacks, from these types of tactics and from all this type of terror. Yesterday we saw our Premier, the opposition, the Speaker and all members come together and work together for the good of the people and for the good of our communities.

Premier, how do you plan to continue to work with all members to ensure the safety and security of the towns and communities that we represent all across Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I expect and I propose that we continue to work in the non-partisan way that we have over the last 24 hours. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has briefed cabinet and members of all three parties on the framework that we have in place to address threats of violence and what we know about the incident.

The minister continues to receive updates on a regular basis. He gets those updates from authorities. He will continue to work across the aisle to provide updates as they become available. I would just say to members opposite that if you have any questions, if there is anything that you are unsure about, please do not hesitate to speak with the minister because we will provide information as we can. But we also want you to know that if you have any questions, or if there are questions from your communities, please let us know about those so that we can share all the information that we have.

#### INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My next question is to the Premier. Yesterday and of course in the days and weeks ahead, our resolve as Canadians to never be intimidated will continually be tested as we seek to balance the need for order and security within our traditions of freedom and open democracy. We all have a renewed appreciation today for the vitality and stability of our country. It is important that we safeguard both the well-being and quality of life of the people of Ontario, and that is why I



want to speak to you today in this question about the economy.

Economic security is about fostering opportunity and opening trade barriers that are preventing growth and prosperity from taking hold. Ultimately, it's about creating jobs and growing our local economy in our communities.

Premier, the people of Ontario want to know, what are you doing today to tear down trade barriers, create jobs and ensure Ontario's economic security?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, the member opposite will be happy to know that I am leaving for China on a trade mission with the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Economic Development. That is all about finding ways to work in partnership, to look for opportunities and to connect businesses here in Ontario with opportunities in China. That is a major part of our economic strategy.

The member opposite will also be pleased to know, I think, that in my conversations with my colleague Premiers across the country, we are very intent on removing barriers. I am going to be speaking with Premier Couillard today and tomorrow in Niagara at the Chamber of Commerce economic summit. We are engaged right now in a conversation about how we can provide more openness between Ontario and Quebec and among provinces across the country. That is an active conversation among Premiers in this country.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Premier, you speak about travelling with the delegation to China to meet with friends and partners in Jiangsu province. You're also going to stop, I understand, in Beijing and Shanghai to talk about how we can increase that relationship.

While I can appreciate your desire for these types of trips, the people of Ontario have far greater concerns right here at home. While you are focused on expensive international missions, provincial Premiers all across Canada are moving forward on a Canada-wide free trade zone, something that we discussed in this House back in July.

Premier, have you made any real progress on this front since we last spoke, or are you still refusing to work with Premier Brad Wall to get it done?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's quite a remarkable question, given that I was fully a part of the conversation with the Council of the Federation. All of the Premiers across the country agree that this is an issue that we are engaged in. We are looking at the agreement on internal trade and we are making changes. We are updating it.

There is a little bit of an undercurrent in the member opposite's question that somehow we haven't done anything. That echoes what some members of the federal government have said, Mr. Speaker. It's just not true. We are engaged, as Premiers, on making sure that we open up and solve the real problems and the real barriers to trade where they exist. We are not going after phantom barriers. We want it to be a very real process. That's the exercise we're engaged in. Where there is a real barrier,

where there's a real opportunity for improved trade, we are making those changes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Premier: While you are focused on your trip to China, within Canada there are significant trade barriers in numerous sectors, including energy, labour and procurement. These barriers are costing Ontario residents directly, with reduced opportunities, fewer jobs and higher consumer prices, and are something we simply cannot afford.

Premier, interprovincial trade makes up a huge percentage of Ontario's economy and, because of that, the people of Ontario are counting on you to take the lead on important opportunities for our workers and employers.

In the spirit of working together, what specific actions will you commit to today to move forward with Ontario's participation in the job-creating Canada-wide free trade zone?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm taking those actions. The member opposite is at least three months behind, because I am already working with my colleague Premiers to make sure that we find the opportunities to work together. I went to Quebec. I met with Premier Couillard. We talked about opportunities even before we went to the Council of the Federation meeting. We are working on breaking down those barriers.

I just want to take on the question about going to China.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Simcoe North, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** If the party opposite is going to propose that we, as a government, never travel internationally, that we never take the opportunity to go to other countries and create new markets, then I would say they are wrong-headed, they are not looking at the opportunities that exist for Ontario, and I reject that notion.

We must connect with other countries. We must turn our chairs outwards and we must become an exporting nation to other countries around the world.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Pretty good time for a junket.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe North: second time. Thank you.

New question.

## LEGISLATIVE PRECINCT SECURITY

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday was a difficult day for Canadians. Over the coming weeks and months, we will all be looking for answers. This isn't a time for partisanship. As Canadians, as Ontarians and as parliamentarians, we are part of a big family. I think we owe it to all Ontarians to make sure that their House, the House we are in now, is safe and open.

Does the Premier agree that we need to be thoughtful and balanced in the coming days and ensure we keep our proud tradition of openness and access to our Legislature alive?

1050

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with that imperative. I think it's extremely open. This is the people's House, and it's very important that we keep access to this House as open as possible.

At the same time, I have to make sure—we all have to make sure—that we abide by the advice from the Speaker and security authorities here in the precinct and beyond. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services is working with all levels of security authorities to make sure we have all the information that's necessary, which we will share, as I said, with members of the opposition parties.

We will do everything in our power to make sure that this is a safe place and a functioning place for the people of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** As an MPP, I am proud to walk the halls of Queen's Park and see everyone from locals to visitors from across the globe visiting our Legislature. Of course, we need the legislative precinct to be safe. I believe that people from every corner of our province should feel welcome to come to our Legislature, whether it's to see question period, visit their MPP or see the beautiful art on the walls. This place belongs to Ontarians.

Does the Premier commit to supporting that tradition, that this Legislature belongs to Ontarians and that we need to ensure they feel safe and welcome at all times?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member opposite for the question.

First of all, I want to pay my condolences and respect to the family and friends of Corporal Nathan Cirillo. The tragic incident that took place yesterday in Ottawa was in the heart of my community, the community of Ottawa Centre, which I have the great privilege of representing.

I have a lot of friends, and my own staff, who were engaged in the incident and lockdown at Parliament Hill. I want to thank all the members for their support yesterday and today. It made my job that much easier in terms of making sure we all are safe in our province.

Speaker, as you are well aware, matters around safety and security at Queen's Park are totally within the purview of yourself, as the Speaker of this Legislature, and that of the Sergeant-at-Arms. We, of course, salute and thank the professionalism and dedication of all the security staff who work at Queen's Park. We will leave it up to you and the security experts you rely on to make a determination as to the level of security at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Speaker, I think we all agree that this is a time for coming together. I want to take a mo-

ment, on behalf of our caucus, to thank our Sergeant-at-Arms and our team of professional Legislative Assembly security.

Does the Premier agree that our security protocols will need to be guided by facts and ensure we proceed rationally and calmly?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Again, thanks to the member for the question.

When it comes to the safety and security of the precinct at the Legislature, as I mentioned earlier, that is totally within your purview as the elected Speaker of this House. Of course, you, working with the Sergeant-at-Arms, will make those determinations, relying on expert opinion.

I want to assure the members of the House that, as the Premier mentioned earlier, we have very well-coordinated plans, working with the federal government. CSIS, the RCMP, the OPP and our local police services regularly exchange and share information so that we have effective plans in place.

Yesterday, as the incident developed, we saw all those plans being fully and properly activated, making sure that information was provided through the federal government to the OPP and through the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to all local police services so they know exactly the steps they need to take.

## TRANSIT FUNDING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, in estimates with the transportation minister, we learned, unfortunately, that promises that were made by the Liberal government during the campaign are not actually promises at all regarding transportation to Ontario communities but simply possibilities. Apparently, the dedicated transit funding that we also heard promises about means a multi-billion dollar transit loophole. We were promised dedicated transit funding, but there's nothing dedicated about it, because there's no legislation and there's no regulation.

If "dedicated revenue" doesn't actually mean that anything is dedicated, how does the Premier define "dedicated transit funding?"

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I hope folks will understand that I'm a little bit under the weather this morning, so my voice doesn't sound as it normally does.

I think it's unfortunate that the member who is asking us this question today wasn't paying close enough attention to the really wonderful discussion that we had at estimates yesterday.

As I've said many times, both yesterday at committee and in this Legislature, we have an ambitious plan to move forward with investing \$29 billion over the next decade in crucial public transit and transportation infrastructure.

Just yesterday, in fact, the Minister of Finance responded to a question in this House by making it very



clear that the funding that needs to be in place for us to deliver these positive results for the people of Ontario is in place by virtue of not only our campaign commitments but the passage of the budget earlier this year.

Speaker, I would ask the member opposite to work with us. I know the people of her community want to see these positive results, and we will make them happen.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Sadly, I was paying attention, and I heard that the Niagara rail project may not happen, that Scarborough is just a pipe dream, that Hamilton may not happen. That's what I heard.

This government likes to claim that they're dedicated to transit, Mr. Speaker, but of course the fact is that transit revenue isn't dedicated at all. So how can the Premier actually expect anyone to take their dedication to transit seriously?

It's a direct question: Will the Premier promise Ontarians today and show her commitment to transit by bringing in legislation and regulations that ensure that dedicated transit funding actually goes into transit?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I'm really happy to have the chance to answer this question. It's unfortunate that the member who is posing the question is choosing to hear, I suspect, what she wants to hear around this.

I think the people of her community, the people of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and the people of Ontario want us to get past these kinds of games—the semantics; this notion of parsing words—and they actually want to see us deliver results.

She asked yesterday at committee whether or not we can trust what we're doing as a government and what we propose to do. What I said to that member at committee, which I will repeat here today, is that what I have trust in is the people of Ontario. On June 12, they gave this Premier and this government the mandate to invest \$29 billion over the next 10 years. I trust them. They've entrusted us, and we're going to get the job done.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** What the people of Ontario heard was the Liberals promising dedicated transit funding and that the promised Trillium Trust would hold that money. That's what they heard. But there is absolutely no guarantee that even a nickel will make it into the Trillium Trust.

I ask again: Will the Premier promise Ontarians today, and show her commitment to transit, by bringing in legislation and regulations that ensure dedicated transit funding actually goes into transit?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of introducing a budget not once, but twice. I gave the opportunity for the members opposite to appreciate what it is we're doing.

We are putting forward—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Okay. Thank you. Finish, please.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** In the book, and following discussions that we've had since, even with the public who went forward and read this book—probably more so than the opposition, by all counts—we talk about establishing a Trillium Trust, which would be the funnel to put forward all the funds and revenues and excesses that we do from those assets, to be put in that trust. As well, we've dedicated certain portions of our gas tax to transit.

Mr. Speaker, what is important to note is that we are building transit. The Minister of Transportation and this government are making the necessary investments, and we're funding it through the Trillium Trust and other means.

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## RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Minister, I'm sure you've been updated on the ongoing dilemma of the Rondeau Cottagers Association.

Fact: 283 cottager leases expire December 31, 2017. Fact: The park was established in 1894 for the purpose of cottaging. Fact: Three environmental reports that were completed in 2013 were only publicly published during the writ period in May of this year. This government, Minister, has displayed a clear pattern of holding documents and releasing them when they will face the least amount of scrutiny. Lastly, the heritage dock damaged during the harsh winter was disassembled without an engineering report to determine the extent of the damage. Locals feel that this could, in fact, be a sign of things to come and are worried about the park's future.

Minister, will you tell us today why these docs were stalled and who gave permission to tear down that dock?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Thank you to the member for the question. I know that the issues around Rondeau, in the broadest context, are very important to him. In fact, I think maybe the first question I had in the House after I'd been appointed as the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry was from that member.

I would say to him that it's very similar in some contexts to the question that was asked yesterday by his colleague around Algonquin Park. Both Rondeau and Algonquin are multi-use parks. They have a long history of being multi-use parks. We respect that. We're trying to find our way and migrate our way through these issues.

In the supplementary, I'll provide a bit more detail for the member on where we are when it comes to Rondeau specifically. But I will say that at this point, there is no decision imminent. We have respected the history of multi-use for Rondeau and for Algonquin. We had a great chat yesterday with the member about how we've approached the issues related to Algonquin. Hopefully, in the supplementary, I can provide the member with a bit of comfort as we move forward on the Rondeau situation as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Minister, the longer your department delays the RCA report, the more people worry that the 283 cottages will, in fact, be removed. Former Ministers Cansfield, Jeffrey and Gravelle have stated that the cottagers have a right to remain in Rondeau. Minister Orazietti had stated that this pressing issue would be cleared up on his watch, but in fairness, an election got in the way. Minister, your predecessors don't want this, the cottagers don't want this, and I sure as heck don't want this. The decision will have to be made under your watch.

So Minister, will you agree to meet with me by October 30 to finalize a positive outcome for the Rondeau cottagers so they can continue to live in peace and harmony with nature, restore their cottages and once again stimulate the economy?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Thank you once again to the member for the question. I'm happy to meet with the member, but I won't put a timeline on the decision, so if that's the point of the meeting, we'll say no. But if you want to meet and have a discussion around issues related to Rondeau, I'm happy to do that.

As the member knows, there were at least two studies that were conducted related to Rondeau, both economic and environmental. Those studies were brought in-house. They were reviewed. The issues related to Rondeau are considered so important to the government that they not only took in those studies, but then they also asked for a peer review of those studies. We're still analyzing that data. I haven't had the ministry come back to me with information related to the peer review of those two studies. When I get that, I'm happy to share it with the House. At some point going forward, we'll make a decision, and we'll let the member know.

But again, in regard to the meeting, we're happy to sit down. In fact, we live in the same building now. I saw you in the elevator the other day. Maybe we don't even have to use legislative time. Offer to buy me a beer. We'll get together, and we'll talk about Rondeau. It'll all be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### ELLIOT LAKE INQUIRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you.

My question is to the Premier. Justice Bélanger took great care, two years and \$20 million to consider the full picture of what went wrong that day in June 2012 that led to the Elliot Lake mall collapse. Justice Bélanger made numerous recommendations for this government to implement so that this tragedy would never happen again. Lives were forever changed by those events, and I agree with Justice Bélanger when he says, "The residents of Ontario, and Elliot Lake in particular, have a right to know the extent to which governments and other public institutions will implement the recommendations and the reasons for any deferral or rejection."

Premier, what are you doing to implement Justice Bélanger's recommendations?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will want to comment on this, but I want to take this opportunity—I haven't had a chance to do this in the House—to thank Commissioner Bélanger and his team for the very thorough study of the Algo Centre Mall tragedy. My heart goes out to the families and the loved ones of Mrs. Doloris Perizzolo and Ms. Lucie Aylwin. It's a very tragic, tragic situation, and we are committed to making sure that events like this won't happen in the future. I say that sincerely to the member opposite.

What we are doing in the immediate term while we're reviewing the report, because we are committed to reviewing the report and looking at next steps—but in the meantime, we're establishing an advisory panel to get recommendations on how to move forward. We're strengthening and clarifying the process of ongoing rescue and recovery efforts, and we're reviewing the guidelines that can help first responders to work together. So that's in the immediate term.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Some of the recommendations from Justice Bélanger's report include:

- implement minimum structural maintenance standards for large-scale buildings across Ontario and require them to be regularly inspected;

- create a publicly accessible database of structural inspections performed by licensed structural engineers;

- restore funding to urban search and rescue teams, enhance their training and ensure they can be quickly dispatched to all parts of the province;

- build partnerships with Ontario Mine Rescue, which has 875 trained volunteer rescuers who are all mine employees, to assist in future disasters.

Minister, when can we expect actions on these recommendations? The memory of Lucie and Doloris is more than enough motivation to getting it right this time.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Thank you for the question. Of course, the events at Elliot Lake were a real tragedy, one that no member of this Legislative Assembly would ever want to see repeated.

The commissioner did a very extensive and very fair report and made a number of recommendations, all of which we are taking seriously. The Premier mentioned, in her response to the first part of the question, setting up the advisory committee. We're doing that.

I want to remind the member opposite also that the commissioner acknowledged in his report, very eloquently, I thought, that the current system we have in Ontario works very, very well, that it's a model that many other jurisdictions look to for advice and guidance. I think that speaks well for most of our building officials.

We, of course, are going to conduct a comprehensive review. The advisory committee is being set up, as the Premier mentioned.



## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. In my riding of Etobicoke Centre, we have a large number of small and large business owners, as well as people who are involved in business. When I speak with them, they tell me that it's so important that here in Ontario we create an environment where businesses have an opportunity to grow, and through that, we create employment for all Ontarians across all sectors.

One of the most effective ways to do that is through the expansion and strengthening of our trade relationship with the United States. In fact, I know that the Premier's mandate letter to your ministry emphasizes the government's goal to advance international trade interests.

Minister, would you tell us what action is being taken to ensure a beneficial trading relationship with the United States?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member from Etobicoke Centre for asking.

Speaker, last week, I was in America. I was in Washington conducting a trade mission. This was my first trade mission as minister responsible for international trade, and I am proud of it. I had a great trip, very fruitful and downright important. It is important because, as the member states, the US is Ontario's largest trading partner.

In 2013, Ontario's exports to the US totalled \$120 billion, importing \$115 billion. In Ontario's trade with the world, the US represents 64% of that total. This is a big number. We must maintain our close ties with the US. We must strengthen our trade with them. It's a win-win situation. It will benefit our economy. It will create jobs. It will benefit the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'm sure that the people of Ontario will be pleased to hear of the confidence the minister has in our broader relationship with the United States. It's encouraging to know that this government understands and values the broader scope and depth of our partnership.

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I would say, however, and I think the minister would agree, that it's critical that we explore all possible avenues for economic development and growth. In fact, I was recently at a meeting at the Rotary Club of Etobicoke, where I met with business people who are giving back to their community, and they spoke to me of the work they are doing abroad, in Asia and in Europe, through their businesses.

The economic success of Ontario will be greatly influenced by our ability to expand, negotiate and work with our global trade partners. Minister, the business community of my riding—and, I believe, of all of Ontario—would be interested in hearing what steps are being taken to provide additional opportunities for trade investment outside of the United States.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Speaker, while I was in Washington, I was told that the US has more trade discussions

with Mexico than with Canada. When I asked, "How is this possible? How does Mexico work with you so often?" the response was, "Because they keep knocking on our doors."

Our trade partnership with the US is one that we must work to preserve and strengthen. The Premier's mandate letter was clear when she said that we must seek opportunities worldwide. It is our duty to knock on these doors on behalf of all Ontarians.

As the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, I will work to knock on the door of the United States and the doors of the world. This is why I look forward to trade missions like the one to China that myself, the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development will embark on this week.

## CHILD CARE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier. There is a plan by the government to eliminate 140,000 child care spaces in the province of Ontario. The Association of Day Care Providers said just yesterday that your Liberal plan "would not only do little to prevent illegal daycare centres from operating, it could push many licensed child care centres into closing ...."

This will amplify the child care shortages across the province of Ontario, particularly in suburban and rural communities like the ones I represent. I would caution the government against this plan that they've got in place, which is being debated this afternoon.

I would ask the Premier if she will pull her plan to eliminate 140,000 child care spaces across the province and instead consult with child care operators right across the province.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Yes. I'm not sure, but I would understand, with all the things that happened yesterday, that perhaps the member opposite missed this: The Ombudsman actually released his report yesterday, investigating the ministry's capacity to deal with unlicensed daycare and how we followed up on complaints.

I would like to say that, in fact, the Ombudsman of this province has made a number of recommendations—113 recommendations—and actually noted in his report that Bill 10, the legislation that we began leadoff on yesterday and are debating this afternoon, addresses 35 of the recommendations. He exhorted us to get on with dealing with it quickly and passing it quickly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's pretty simple: She's only meeting a third of his recommendations. Above and beyond that, this is the big challenge, and something that the minister probably doesn't want out there today, but this is what the Ombudsman actually said: It's about a government that put kids at risk through "years of bad administration and neglect." That's from him. That means that the ministry has failed.

He used words like "the ministry neglected," "lack of communication" and "careless and inconsistent com-

plaint intake practices” to describe your ministry. Now, because of the government’s malfeasance, 140,000 child care spaces are at risk in this province.

The Liberal plan that is before this assembly will do nothing to fix the problem. If the government is not going to pull the bill—which is a bad bill, and which child care operators across the province are saying is a bad bill—will the minister at least commit today to travelling to affected communities right across this province, in suburban and rural Ontario?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I will commit to doing exactly what the Ombudsman recommended, which was to pass the bill as quickly as possible. That’s what I will commit to.

I suggest that the member opposite actually might want to read what the Ombudsman said a little bit more closely, because he pointed out that we have already addressed 95 of his recommendations; that there are another 60 that we have addressed by doing things like creating a dedicated enforcement unit to look at unlicensed daycare complaints; and that we have put in place a searchable website so parents can get the information about unlicensed home providers.

What I would finally—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Get your facts straight, Liz.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I’m going to ask the member from Simcoe North to come to order, but I’m going to use what he said as a springboard to my recommendation that I’ve always used. Please use people’s titles and their ridings only. It lowers the temperature, and I don’t want it raised.

Please finish; wrap up.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I would like to read to you the Ombudsman’s concluding remark:

“In the past year, the ministry has made genuine and focused efforts to rise to the challenge of ensuring that Ontario has a proactive, timely, risk-based, and effective system for monitoring unlicensed child care operations.” That’s what the Ombudsman said.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** My question is for the Minister of Health. This evening I will be attending the fifth annual Sam Bruno Dinner to raise funds to bring a PET scanner to our hospital, Health Sciences North. I knew Sam personally; he was a businessman who spent his final years working to bring this crucial diagnostic device to the north. Our community has carried on Sam’s fight to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving technology, and together we raised almost \$500,000.

I would love to deliver good news tonight to Sudbury. Will the new minister commit to finally purchasing a PET scanner for northeastern Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you for the question. I want to say that I had the privilege of meeting with the North East LHIN just a couple of weeks ago when the cabinet was in Sudbury for that meeting, and I was able to speak with the health leadership in that community, in

fact in that region, to get a better understanding of not just the needs going forward but also the incredible services that are being provided in Sudbury and elsewhere.

With regard to this specific issue and request, I’m happy to talk to the member opposite more to familiarize myself with precisely what the request entails and where my ministry is at in terms of consideration of that request, as well. I’m happy to address the issue more in the supplementary as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** For over five years, New Democrats have been standing up for northerners in making a simple, straightforward request. We want northerners to have the same access to life-saving PET scanners as every other Ontarian. That’s what is fair and that’s what is right. Why does the government continue to ignore the needs of northeastern Ontario by refusing to purchase a PET scanner for our community?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you again for the supplementary. I have to say that the services that are being provided, as the member opposite knows, not only in Sudbury but in the region as a whole, are state-of-the-art and something that the north, and in fact the whole province, can be proud of with regard to the investments, but also the tremendous gathering of health care professionals who have been able to provide services that I am confident are as important to the locality but as exceptional as we find in other parts of the province. Again, as I mentioned to the member opposite, I’d be happy to speak more directly with him about the specific request that he mentions, so perhaps we could make those arrangements.

### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Last year, we experienced one of the toughest winters in recent memory. As the member for Newmarket–Aurora, I and my aching back distinctly remember the challenges that my community faced while contending with the harsh weather—snow, ice and cold temperatures day after day, it seems. That’s why I was extremely pleased to hear the Minister of Transportation announce last Thursday additional oversight and equipment for winter maintenance. This is a strong step toward being prepared for the upcoming winter season, and I know that many in my community of Newmarket–Aurora were pleased to hear about this great initiative.

Could the minister please provide members of the House with further information on last week’s announcement?

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**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by trying to recover my voice, and thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for that very timely question. I also want to thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West and my parliamentary assistant, the member from Eglington–Lawrence, for all of their work in the announcements



that we made last week regarding MTO's preparations for the upcoming winter season.

The member from Newmarket is certainly correct. Last year was a difficult winter for people living right across Ontario. That's why we announced last Thursday that the government of Ontario will be delivering 50 additional pieces of winter maintenance equipment to southern Ontario. This equipment will help ensure that freeway ramps and shoulders are cleared more quickly, which will help to make our roads even safer for those commuting this harsh winter. That number of 50 is in addition to the 55 new pieces of equipment that were deployed last year, primarily in northern Ontario.

We're also introducing 20 new inspectors who will provide on-the-ground oversight of our contractors during winter storms.

I'm confident this will help us be prepared for this coming winter.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I want to thank the minister for his response.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to attend the opening of the 13-kilometre extension of Highway 404 from Green Lane to Ravenshoe in East Gwillimbury in September. I was pleased to drive that highway with the member from York-Simcoe, and many others. I don't think that was the member who passed me in that little black Volkswagen; that was another regional member.

This great new extension is taking 22,000 cars off the local roads each day. Many of those cars would pass through my riding, so we're very appreciative of that extension.

I'm pleased to know that our government is committed to keeping the highest possible standards for winter maintenance on roads like these. But, Minister, last winter there were a number of concerns raised by people living in Newmarket-Aurora—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:**—that equipment was not getting onto our roads fast enough. The faster the snow is cleared, the safer our roads will be for Ontario drivers. I want to make sure that my constituents will be provided a safe commute when travelling in the winter.

Can the minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I very clearly got the gist of the member's question and I want to thank him for the wonderful leadership that he is showing in Newmarket-Aurora, as a neighbour to all of us who also have the privilege of representing York region communities.

Speaker, I know that there were concerns raised last winter regarding the snow not being cleared quickly enough. We have clearly listened to this feedback, and we're working to take proactive measures, some of which I mentioned in my initial answer, for the upcoming winter season.

There is no doubt that every additional piece of equipment that we have on the roads, the highways, the ramps

and the shoulders makes a positive difference. Additional equipment allows our contractor partners to deploy support quickly to where it's needed most, and it ensures that they are able to work with us to clear our highways, our ramps and our shoulders as quickly as possible. This is because the safety of our roads is our number one priority. We will continue to work with all of our road safety partners, all communities across Ontario and our area maintenance contractors to make sure that our province is adequately prepared for what could be, but we hope won't be, another long and cold winter.

#### ASTHMA

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Premier. Last session I worked very hard to try to get my private member's bill, Ryan's Law, passed through committee before the election. Unfortunately, it didn't happen. In July, I reintroduced my bill, and it's coming up for second reading this afternoon.

Premier, Ryan's Law is very important. It would ensure that the one in five children who are asthmatic can attend asthma-friendly schools regardless of where they live in our province. It is my hope that we can put aside our partisanship and work together to ensure that this vital bill is enacted into law as quickly as possible. However, I know that with a majority government, opposition bills tend to get shelved, regardless of how vital they are.

Premier, will you commit to doing everything you can to ensure the quick passage of Ryan's Law?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the member opposite for his question, because we agree that the health and safety of our students is one of our absolutely top priorities. I do want to say that our heart goes out to Ryan Gibbons's family for his tragic loss, and to thank you for your advocacy on behalf of children with asthma.

I'd also like to thank you because I know that last time, before we had the election, your bill not only passed second reading, but it got to committee; there were a number of amendments that were made. I want to thank you for when you retabled the bill; you've actually captured a number of the amendments that had already been agreed to in committee.

I'm particularly happy to see that the language that actually makes it clear that where a child's parents and doctors consent to the child carrying the inhaler, that they can do that. Yes, we are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you for the answer, Minister.

Back to the Premier: Premier, I have heard from many families across this province whose children are still not able to access inhalers. I'm positive, after the last response, that Ryan's Law will pass through second reading.

Premier, I would hope going forward, though, that the bill does not get lost in the committee structure and the House leaders can work together to ensure that Ryan's

Law goes out to committee as quickly as possible. I'd like to see this bill passed into law by spring so that next September all children with asthma throughout our society are able to have safe environments in the school.

Premier, would you ensure that Ryan's Law gets priority as it moves through committee so that we can get it through third reading and into law by spring?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Obviously, I have no control over conversations between the three House leaders. But what I did want to note is that we are supportive of the bill. I do have one area of concern, which is that we are seeing bills come up that are specific to a number of different diseases and the feedback that we are getting from educators is that it's very difficult when they have a separate law addressing each health problem that a student might present.

We've asked OPHEA, the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, to have a look at the issue and to report back to us on best practice because we really do need—I commend you for the great work that you've done with asthma, but we really do need to find some comprehensive way of pulling together responses to all the different diseases.

I'm also looking forward to the report OPHEA will be presenting in the winter.

## CHILD CARE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, I was a working mom and like every other parent I cared nothing more than about the safety of my child. So it makes absolutely no sense to me or any other parent that this government could repeatedly fail to look out for the safety of kids in unlicensed daycares. Yesterday, the Ombudsman condemned the Liberals' oversight of the unlicensed care as abysmal, inept, dysfunctional, careless, sloppy and wrong.

Why did four children have to die in just seven months of daycare before this government realized it wasn't doing a good job?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** What I would like to note is that while the Ombudsman quite accurately described some of the problems, what he also noted was that we have, not even waiting for the legislation to be passed, taken a number of steps already to implement some of his recommendations. That includes things like setting up a dedicated enforcement unit. One of the remarks that the Ombudsman made was that the people who were responsible were mainly responsible for licensing, not trained investigators. We actually have hired the people doing the training to have a dedicated enforcement unit.

Now, when we pass Bill 10, they will be able to be much more effective, but we've got that dedicated enforcement unit to respond to complaints in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Once again, I'm going back to the Premier. I asked the Ombudsman to conduct his investigation after the tragic death of two-year-old Eva

Ravikovich in a dirty, overcrowded, illegal daycare. The government ignored complaints about this daycare until it was too late. Then the government claimed in court that it does not owe a duty of care to 800,000 kids in unlicensed daycares. I think every parent in this province profoundly disagrees.

In light of this scathing report, I'd like to give the Premier another chance to do the right thing. Does the Premier believe her government owes a duty of care to 800,000 kids in unlicensed child care or not?

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**Hon. Liz Sandals:** As I said before, the Ombudsman himself has pointed out that we have already addressed 95 of his 113 recommendations. That includes legislation, Bill 10, which, now that we've set up the enforcement unit, would actually give them some teeth. If we can get Bill 10 passed, those inspectors would have the power to enter without warrant; the ministry would have the power to have administrative penalties, which in plain English means fines; we would no longer have to go to court. In fact, when somebody violates the rules, we would be able to impose fines of up to \$100,000. So for the first time ever, if we can pass Bill 10, we will have the ability to do something about the complaints.

So I really hope that the member opposite, who is very passionate about child care, is actually going to help us get the bill passed.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Mike Colle:** My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, the home construction industry is a crucial part of Ontario's economy. Thankfully, it is thriving and employs tens of thousands of men and women in good jobs.

In my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, tens of thousands of homes are under construction every day, from high-rises to home rebuilds and renovations. But tragically, this summer, a 19-year-old worker from Scarborough by the name of Ryan Pearce lost his life on one of these home construction sites on Brookdale Avenue in my riding while he was working on underpinning a home.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, my constituents and people all over Toronto want to know what our government is doing to ensure the safety of construction workers so that more don't die on the job, especially on these home rebuild projects. How can we prevent further tragedies like the one that befell Ryan Pearce?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you to the honourable member for that excellent and important question. I know my thoughts are with the family and with the colleagues of the person who lost his life in that tragic incident this summer. I know the thoughts of all members of this House are with them as well.

I think we all agree that when Ontarians go to work, they are entitled to come home safely at the end of the day, so workplace safety is the priority of the Ministry of Labour. It's a goal we work to at the ministry each and every day. We're working hard to ensure that both the employees and the employers in this province know their



rights and that they are fulfilling their responsibilities. We're actively prosecuting employers that choose to break the law. We're proactively inspecting workplaces; we're ensuring that those rules are being followed. We're working with partners in prevention of future incidents.

But we know more needs to be done, particularly in construction, to ensure the safety of everyone who works on these sites. That is why the Premier, in her recent public mandate letter, underlined increased health and safety as a priority of this government. We are working right now on an action plan. I can address that in the supplementary, perhaps.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Hopefully, this construction safety action plan will help prevent future tragedies like the one that befell this poor 19-year-old kid who was working on his first job. He had just graduated from high school in Scarborough, first in his class. He gets the job. He's working underpinning—no training. We don't know what kind of supervision there was. No 19-year-old should have to lose their life on their first job.

When I met with Ontario's Chief Prevention Officer, George Gritziotis, I was very impressed with his knowledge and his willingness to act.

Mr. Minister, what I worry about is not the large-scale construction projects but the tens of thousands of home renovations and rebuilds which are taking place all over this province. What do we have to do to ensure the homeowner, the contractors, the workers and the provincial and city inspectors have the resources to train, inspect and ensure that worker safety is taken seriously? How can we make sure everyone involved takes safety seriously, understands that rebuilding and renovating a home—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** The member is absolutely right. We need to pay as much attention to the smaller projects as we do to the larger projects in this province.

That's why the construction action plan is going to be developed with system partners from big and small business. We're going to build upon the work that's already under way that better protects workers in our construction sites already. We're working with those partners to develop new mandatory entry-level training that is unique to the construction industry. We're also introducing new mandatory fall-protection training.

We've got joint health-and-safety-specific training standards that we'll be introducing for those committees. We're moving forward with some regulatory proposals that are going to enhance both the health and the safety of construction workers specifically, because it's this simple: We need to put an end to deadly workplace fatalities. With these safety mechanisms in place on construction sites all over the province, we think we can make a difference in reducing injuries.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In the Brock township area

of my riding, the Brock Community Health Centre has been left in a holding pattern by the Ministry of Health as it awaits final approval for its permanent location. The paperwork has been filed. The project has been fully endorsed by the Central East LHIN. The money has been put aside, and the community has waited patiently for many, many years for this project to be completed.

Minister, I ask you today why final approval of stage 2 of this capital investment project has not been received.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. In fact, first I want to thank the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for her advocacy and support for the development, on a new site, of the Brock Community Health Centre. I know that she has been a strong supporter of this project, and I thank her for that.

Certainly, this is a process. Often, for the proponents, it seems unnecessarily long. There are actually measures in place to ensure that steps are followed and the decision is made on a good, scientific basis and also from an operational perspective, to ensure that the CHC is able to continue, in an appropriate way to respond to the needs of the community.

Issues such as space, volume and, obviously, the number of patients that will be seen, and staffing, are important to that consideration in making that decision.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** As I said, the board of the CHC, the Brock CHC itself, the employees and the community have anticipated that this project would be done in a reasonable time period.

Programs have been located at five interim locations. Three of them have had to be moved from those locations due to health and safety issues. Because of the limitations of those locations, they cannot hire a full complement of resources that have been approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and they can't recruit doctors, most importantly of all.

This announcement was initially done in 2006, I believe. The funding for the permanent facility was done in 2011 and so we're talking 13, 14 years, and we seem to be mired down.

Yes, I appreciate what the minister has said on the steps, but when you have all the parties that I've mentioned, everyone that is involved, saying that we've waited a very, very long time and we've given you everything that we have and is necessarily required from the ministry, we'd just appreciate final approval as soon as possible, Minister.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm actually optimistic that we can, in a relatively short period of time, move beyond the stage 2 process. I know that the Central East LHIN has been working very closely with the Brock CHC.

I also know that, in fact, a meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday between the CHC and the LHIN and the capital branch within the Ministry of Health to resolve, hopefully, any further outstanding issues and certainly provide that clarity and a timeline to the CHC so we can move forward on this important project.

I think we're all in agreement in terms of the importance of this. I know that it has been a significant period

of time to get to this point. My commitment to the member opposite is that I am personally involved, and I will do what I can to make sure that the correct decisions are made and they're made in as expeditious and responsible a manner as possible.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kingston and the Islands on a point of order.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I have some introductions that I would like to bring to the House today. I would like to welcome my father, Ted Kiwala; my two daughters, Linnaea and Helene Kiwala; and my partner, Chris Van der Vyver, without whom I would probably not be standing here today.

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to Katsitsias Betty Maracle, Bear Clan, Mohawk Nation, Tyendinaga, and Laurel Claus-Johnson, a Mohawk Bear Clan community grandmother, a former VP of the Ontario Native Women's Association and a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

I would also like to welcome Bryan Bowers. He's of mixed settler and First Nations ancestry. He's a board member of the First Nations Technical Institute in Tyendinaga Mohawk territory and a board member of the Naval Marine Archive in Picton. Bryan is a former member of the OPP and Kingston city police.

A warm welcome to you all who have come from Kingston today to support my motion on missing and murdered aboriginal women.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome to our visitors.

I want to advise all members that the book of condolence for Corporal Nathan Cirillo is now set up in the main lobby. I appreciate your motion.

I know this is a little unorthodox because he left, but at the Speaker's will, I've always taken it upon myself to introduce all former members. In the east public gallery a little while ago was Mr. Rob Milligan, Northumberland-Quinte West in the 40th Parliament. I know he's doing the honourable thing today.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.*

### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Can I just correct my record from this morning?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound on a point of order?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make sure that the Campbellford District High School was included with Mr. Rob Milligan, a former MPP, who was here from Northumberland-Quinte West. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It's a correction of the record?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Yes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, okay. Thank you. Members have that right.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** I'd like to introduce Jennifer Pacco, who's in the gallery here. She's a resident of Brampton-Springdale who wanted to further know how Queen's Park works, so she's here to visit us for the day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### HEPWORTH-SHALLOW LAKE ROTARY CLUB

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I rise in the House today to congratulate the Hepworth-Shallow Lake Rotary Club on its 65th anniversary.

I had the honour of attending a special celebration on October 3, along with my friend MP Larry Miller, where we applauded all members, past and present, for their strong and sustained efforts in raising money for a great variety of causes, local and international, and to commend the hard work of the men and women who have been doing remarkable work since 1949.

I'd also like to recognize one of the club members, and a special friend of my family, Mr. Ed Ruth, who celebrated his 50th anniversary with the Hepworth-Shallow Lake Rotary Club. His is truly an exceptional achievement. Ed suffered an accident in his early 20s that resulted in the loss of one arm. This, however, did not slow Ed down. With wife Betty, who is always by his side, and children Allan, Loretta and Jerry to support, he simply took a positive attitude and pushed on. He endeavoured to do anything a person with two arms could do. A sight I will never forget, as a young boy, was watching Ed shovel gravel with one arm. He was and continues to be an inspiration.

He is a very successful businessman who continues to tinker in a variety of projects and is a valued contributing member of our community. One of the reasons he is able to move forward and become the success that he is was that the Hepworth-Shallow Lake Rotary Club stepped up and offered Ed and his family assistance immediately following his accident. This was a compelling reason for Ed to join Rotary in 1964, and he has remained an active member since.

I believe I speak for all of us in extending our sincere congratulations to Ed on being awarded the prestigious Paul Harris Fellow, the highest honour as a Rotarian, and for living the Rotary motto "Service Above Self."

Congratulations to Ed and also fellow Paul Harris recipients who were recognized for their contributions the same evening: Karen Neerhof, Cliff MacMillan and James (Jim) Noble.



We support and appreciate your tireless volunteering and wish you all the best of health and happiness in the future.

### FEED THE NEED DURHAM

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Feed the Need Durham is an organization that provides food to nearly 50 member agencies across the Durham region and has an impact on the lives of over 30,000 low-income individuals every year. They were founded on the belief that hunger should not prevent anyone from fulfilling their potential, and they have worked tirelessly to this purpose.

I had the opportunity to attend the grand opening of their new facility in Oshawa earlier this month, a move they made to keep up with growing demand.

An incredible number of people are supported by incredible organizations like Feed the Need. Our priority, as MPPs, however, must be to address the need.

The government says they are committed to their Poverty Reduction Strategy, but with no targets or timelines in place it is hard to believe how committed they really are.

Nearly 400,000 Ontarians rely on food banks each month. In fact, nearly 50% of Canada's food bank users are Ontarians. It is our responsibility as MPPs to do everything in our power to improve the lives of the people of this province, and this is a group that we are failing.

Poverty is not a permanent condition, it is not a natural state and it does not have to be an enduring truth in Ontario. It's time to get serious about eradicating poverty in this province. So let's work together to set real targets, and then let's reach them. Then, maybe organizations like Feed the Need will no longer be needed in our province.

### YVONNE ROWATT

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I rise today in memory of a dear friend, a beloved community leader and a remarkable woman who recently passed away.

Yvonne Rowatt was a devoted mother to Gillian and Geoff, loving wife to her husband, Ken, and a doting grandmother; but she will be remembered by many in Halton as a tireless volunteer, organizer and a champion for fairness, justice and democracy.

I had the pleasure of getting to know Yvonne well over the last few years, as did the member from Oakville. She was a dynamo, a woman who didn't understand the words "no" or "impossible." Perhaps what was most impressive was the boundless energy she poured into everything. Everyone around Yvonne was inspired to work a little harder, walk a little farther and stay on the phones just a little bit longer. She was a firecracker with a sharp wit and take-no-prisoners honesty. No one who spent more than few moments with her forgot her. I know I certainly won't.

She was a force of nature; a woman with a loud laugh, a strong smile and a sense of fun. Her tireless spirit was matched only by her unwavering commitment to creating a better society and improving the lives of the less fortunate. She had a dream—a dream of a stronger Ontario and Canada—and she worked hard to make that dream a reality.

We will miss her energy. We will miss her infectious smile. We will miss her shoot-from-the-hip advice. We will miss Yvonne.

### ONTARIO COLLEGE INFORMATION FAIR

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** On Tuesday, I had the opportunity to visit the Ontario College Information Fair right here in Toronto. Twenty-five colleges in Ontario had representatives at the fair to help students with their questions about all the programs each college has to offer. I think this is a great way to help students figure out what they want to take in college. It's a big step, and any guidance is going to go a long way to making sure these students end up where they want to be.

I have always stressed that we need more pathways from elementary and high school into colleges. It isn't enough to start thinking about post-secondary education in grades 11 and 12. I think teachers and schools should start entertaining the idea at an early age so that students know what is out there, whether it's a skilled-trade, college or a university education.

I'd like to commend the people who facilitate this information fair, and all the colleges and their representatives who spent the day with all the students who attended. I could tell each representative really wanted to help guide the students and give them as much information as possible.

When I arrived, I witnessed the busloads of students arriving from the various schools and the amount of parents who had taken their kids to the fair as well. I was also happy to hear that the Ontario College Information Fair expects about 10,000 students this year, and that that number is growing each and every year.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make this statement today, but I also appreciated the opportunity to attend the Ontario College Information Fair. I found it very, very rewarding.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Last Friday, while no one was watching, the Liberal government quietly announced changes to the computer system used to issue cheques to people on social assistance and ODSP. In a letter by the Ministry of Community and Social Services was a bombshell that could devastate some of this province's most vulnerable.

This new system allows the government to double the clawback rate on some overpayments made in error. For example, people who have health problems and received

a little bit more money to cope through a special diet allowance will now have to pay back any money they received by mistake at double the rate. According to the minister, this will “allow” the recipients to pay off their overpayments sooner. The overpayments “may have been incurred,” the minister says, through “a failure by a recipient to report a change of status.” Wow. Talk about blaming the victim.

There are a lot of reasons that this province is cash-strapped: eHealth, Ornge, cancelled gas plants—the list goes on and on. None of those scandals were caused by a single parent on social assistance in this province or a former factory worker who is now battling cancer with a special diet allowance from ODSP, yet this Liberal government tells them it's their own fault.

1310

At a time when child poverty rates have reached epidemic proportions and folks on social assistance have less real income than they did when the Liberals came to power, it's shameful for this government to be making up for its costly mistakes on the backs of the people who can least afford it.

OTTAWA-ORLÉANS  
COMMUNITY BARBECUE  
BARBECUE COMMUNAUTAIRE  
À OTTAWA-ORLÉANS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I am very proud to announce that in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans I held my first community barbecue and corn roast this past summer to reach out to the citizens I represent. The event was held on August 28 at Petrie Island and it was a resounding success. Hundreds of individuals and their families came out to enjoy good food and entertainment.

This was also an opportunity for me to participate in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge to help raise funds and awareness to fight this terrible disease. Needless to say, everyone was quite amused to see me get soaked by a bucket of ice water thrown at me by my very own daughter, Monica. It was surely for a good cause and I'm proud that I did it.

I would like to say thank you to all the community leaders who attended. J'aimerais également remercier nos partenaires qui ont contribué généreusement à faire de cet événement un franc succès : Jennifer Sox et Troy Brown d'Enbridge, Little Ray's Reptile Zoo, Sobeyes, Hydro Ottawa et les pompiers de la ville d'Ottawa.

This day was very special for my riding, and I look forward to hosting my community again next summer at this great event.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I suspect your daughter hated every second of it.

BILL HEASLEY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Among the many attributes making Leeds-Grenville a great place to live is the resolve of our

residents to meet any challenge. When there's a problem in our community, people get to work and make things better.

I rise to celebrate one of those people: Bill Heasley. A former Brockville Citizen of the Year, Bill was also the first chair of the Brockville and district hospice palliative care telethon, an event that, 31 years later, has raised over \$3 million.

In 1999, Bill, from St. John Bosco Catholic Church, and his dear friend, the late Hank Gray from St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, saw another need: too many people in Brockville going hungry. They had a vision to create a low-cost restaurant, naming it after a well-known miracle from the Bible.

Loaves and Fishes opened in April 1999 and served 35 meals on the first of the three days it opened its doors that week. Their vision has grown in ways Bill and Hank likely never dreamed. Today, Loaves and Fishes opens five days a week and its kitchen serves up to 100 people daily—about 400 every week. In return for just \$1, diners find food to fill an empty stomach and fellowship to nourish a weary soul.

This summer, the Loaves and Fishes board paid a well-deserved tribute to Bill Heasley, who, after 15 years, is stepping down to focus on other charity work. He does so knowing that what he helped create will carry on as a source of great comfort for those less fortunate. That is something we can all aspire to.

CASA DO ALENTEJO

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Before I make my statement, I'd like to say that although yesterday was a difficult day for all of us, I'm very proud that we carried on with the obligation and privilege of governing. I would also like to offer my condolences to the family and friends of Corporal Nathan Cirillo. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the legislative security service and the Sergeant-at-Arms for their hard work and dedication in keeping us safe.

Today I'd like to take a moment to recognize the Casa do Alentejo community centre from my great riding of Davenport. Members of this incredible organization joined us in the House for question period on Tuesday, along with two dignitaries from Portugal and a seniors' choir from the University of Aljustrel. It was a pleasure showing them around Queen's Park.

Casa do Alentejo was founded in 1983 as an incorporated, not-for-profit community centre. It is a volunteer-based and volunteer-run organization with many dedicated members, such as Rosa de Sousa, who has been there since day one, and its current president, Carlos de Sousa. Together these volunteers work very hard to promote Portuguese culture and heritage by organizing dinners, themed events, theatre, and folklore festivals.

This year marks Casa do Alentejo's 31st anniversary. That means that for 31 years they have been contributing to the diverse cultural mosaic that is this wonderful



province of ours. They do this by organizing all of these wonderful events that bring people together.

Casa do Alentejo was also the first organization to promote Cultural Weeks, a showcase of Portuguese culture that brings together speakers from Portugal, Canada and abroad. These weeks often include musical performances, book launches and other artistic events.

This year's Alentejo Cultural Week runs until October 25. I wish them my sincere congratulations on their anniversary and on what has been another very, very successful cultural week.

#### ROGER CONANT

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** It's with sadness that I rise today to inform the Legislature of the passing of the Honourable Roger Gordon Conant this past Monday, October 20. I'd like to express my deepest sympathies to my constituent Armand Conant and his family on the passing of his father, the Honourable Roger Gordon Conant.

Born on May 26, 1922, in Ottawa, Roger Conant was the son of Ontario's 12th Premier, Gordon D. Conant, and Verna Conant.

Justice Conant was a graduate of the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School.

He served in the infantry during World War II, landing on the beaches of Normandy with the British army, rose to the rank of major and was awarded the Canadian Forces' Decoration.

Justice Conant was appointed to the District Court of Ontario in 1977—it's now the Superior Court of Ontario—and he was a distinguished jurist who earned the respect of the entire legal community.

After retiring from the Superior Court of Ontario, Justice Conant continued to serve as a public servant and was appointed to the Canada Pension Appeals Board.

In his spare time, he was an avid sailor and a proud member of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club for over 70 years.

Our thoughts are with his family. Please join me today in remembering and recognizing a truly great and distinguished Ontarian and Canadian.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements—even the ones that were longer.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### BENSFORT WOOD INC. ACT, 2014

Ms. Scott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr3, An Act to revive Bensfort Wood Inc.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

##### RESPECT FOR VETERANS ACT (PLACING DONATION BOXES FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY POPPIES IN MEMBERS' OFFICES), 2014

##### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE RESPECT DES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS (PLACEMENT DANS LES BUREAUX DES DÉPUTÉS DE BOÎTES DE DON POUR LES COQUELICOTS DU JOUR DU SOUVENIR)

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 with respect to the placing of donation boxes for Remembrance Day Poppies in members' offices / *Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés en ce qui concerne le placement dans leurs bureaux de boîtes de dons pour les coquelicots du jour du Souvenir.*

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, veterans fought to defend our freedom and to maintain our democracy. In recognition of this sacrifice, the bill amends the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, to confirm that members of the Ontario Legislature are permitted to show respect for veterans by allowing donation boxes for Remembrance Day poppies in their offices.

1320

I had planned for some time to introduce this bill today, but the events of yesterday have made me even more determined to ensure that we are showing respect for our veterans in every way possible.

#### MOTIONS

##### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Labour is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed. Minister?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items number 7, 8 and 12 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Labour moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items number 7, 8 and 12 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### ASTHMA

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on October 9, 2012, 12-year-old Ryan Gibbons unnecessarily died of an asthma attack at school;

"Whereas one in five students in Ontario schools has asthma; and

"Whereas asthma is a disease that can be controlled; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of Ontario schools to ensure asthma-safe environments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Education to take measures to protect pupils with asthma by ensuring all school boards put in place asthma-management plans based on province-wide standards."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and hand it over to page Rachel.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Han Dong:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

"Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by" the honourable member from Davenport.

Now I give my petition to page Darren, and I affix my signature to it.

### ASTHMA

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** "Ryan's Fight: Asthma Awareness. "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on October 9, 2012, 12-year-old Ryan Gibbons unnecessarily died of an asthma attack at school;

"Whereas one in five students in Ontario schools has asthma; and

"Whereas asthma is a disease that can be controlled; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of Ontario schools to ensure asthma-safe environments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Education to take measures to protect pupils with asthma by ensuring all school boards put in place asthma-management plans based on province-wide standards."

I'll be speaking in support of this this afternoon. I'll hand this to page Raveen.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

"Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport."

I'm going to affix my name to this and pass it off to page Colston.

### ASTHMA

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I also have a petition, "Ryan's Fight: Asthma Awareness.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on October 9, 2012, 12-year-old Ryan Gibbons unnecessarily died of an asthma attack at school;

"Whereas one in five students in Ontario schools has asthma; and

"Whereas asthma is a disease that can be controlled; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of Ontario schools to ensure asthma-safe environments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Education to take measures to protect pupils with asthma by ensuring all school boards put in place asthma-management plans based on province-wide standards."

Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with this petition, will sign it, and I will send it down with page Callum to the table.

### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.



"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I affix my signature to the petition and send it to the Clerk with Katie.

#### ASTHMA

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on October 9, 2012, 12-year-old Ryan Gibbons unnecessarily died of an asthma attack at school;

"Whereas one in five students in Ontario schools has asthma; and

"Whereas asthma is a disease that can be controlled; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of Ontario schools to ensure asthma-safe environments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Education to take measures to protect pupils with asthma by ensuring all school boards put in place asthma-management plans based on province-wide standards."

While Rachel waits one second, I will be honoured to affix my signature to this petition.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I support this petition wholeheartedly, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Meher to submit to the Clerk.

#### ASTHMA

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I found another petition on my desk here.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on October 9, 2012, 12-year-old Ryan Gibbons unnecessarily died of an asthma attack at school;

"Whereas one in five students in Ontario schools has asthma; and

"Whereas asthma is a disease that can be controlled; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of Ontario schools to ensure asthma-safe environments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Education to take measures to protect pupils with asthma by ensuring all school boards put in place asthma-management plans based on province-wide standards."

I again sign my signature to this petition and hand it in to page Raveen.

1330

#### SCHOOL TRUSTEES

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I too found a petition here, and would like to present this to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial code of conduct governs every school board in Ontario;

"Whereas the provincial code of conduct provides direction for the creation and implementation of the code of conduct for all school boards;

"Whereas subsection 301(1) of part XIII of the Education Act states that 'the minister may establish a code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools';

"Whereas the current provincial code of conduct does not explicitly state the trustees are also required to adhere to this code of conduct;

"Whereas the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustees held a planning and priorities committee meeting on October 1, 2014;

"Whereas some members of the planning and priorities committee behaved unprofessionally and made racial overtone remarks at the October 1, 2014, meeting; and

"Whereas some members of the planning and priorities committee violated both the provincial code of conduct and the TDSB code of conduct;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the members of the Legislative Assembly amend subsection 301(1) of part XIII of the Education Act to explicitly state the code of conduct also applies to trustees; and

"That members of the Legislative Assembly amend the current provincial code of conduct to explicate the conduct and behaviours of trustees."

Mr. Speaker, I agree full-heartedly with this petition. I'm going to sign it and give it to page Jamie.

## FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, the previous member John O'Toole always said, "Have an extra petition in your desk," and I have found another petition here.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and families are not being properly supported in southwestern Ontario;

"Whereas the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services need to develop a comprehensive care strategy that appoints a lead ministry with the responsibility for coordinating FASD management and prevention efforts;

"Whereas the provincial government needs to reallocate funding to increase FASD diagnostic and treatment capacity in Ontario, increase community and educational supports and increase prevention efforts across the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario take a cross-ministerial approach in developing a comprehensive care strategy that supports and promotes best practices in FASD management and prevention and provides appropriate supports for individuals with FASD so that they may access the necessary services."

I again agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition, and I will give my petition to page Noah.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### HIGHWAY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA GESTION DES INCIDENTS DE LA ROUTE

Mrs. Martow moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to require the establishment of an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for the improvement of highway incident management / *Projet de loi 30, Loi exigeant la constitution d'un comité consultatif pour formuler des recommandations au ministre des Transports et au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels en ce qui concerne l'amélioration de la gestion des incidents de la route.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Before I begin, I'd like to take a moment to thank those who have given me their time, effort and knowledge in order to bring to fruition Bill 30, An Act to require the establishment of an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for the improvement of highway incident management. Many professionals were consulted at multiple stages of this bill, and their insight and advice was instrumental in constructing it. I thank them for their efforts.

The purpose of this bill is clear and simple: to improve our highways. To date, our ability to quickly and effectively clear accidents off our highways is lacking. In too many incidences, our emergency response times are far too slow and our technology is too outdated to provide Ontarians with the support they need after an accident. As such, improving road safety and efficiency should be of utmost importance to all of us. Establishing a committee that would be required to report their findings on various issues currently plaguing Ontario's roads would be a giant step toward achieving a much-needed improvement to our highways.



Highways in southern Ontario, particularly in the greater Toronto area, are among the busiest in the world. Just one section of Highway 401 in Toronto has a daily traffic count of close to 400,000 vehicles. With such high use, it is easy to see how even one accident can affect Ontario's road system and all of its users. Highway stoppages and closures for any length of time have severe social and economic impacts on all Ontario residents. Inefficient accident management results in far too many missed business meetings, family outings or other important personal events because of traffic blockages on Ontario roadways. It also directly correlates to a loss in personal and government revenue—revenue that we so desperately need to fund our health care, education and social programs.

Bill 30 requires the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to convene an advisory committee comprised of individuals and staff who are experts in traffic incident management to look at four major issues with regard to highway safety and accident management, and report back within eight months after its establishment. They are as follows:

- (1) providing public education programs to improve driver behaviour in circumstances involving highway incidents;
- (2) reducing the time for appropriate authorities to detect and verify highway incidents and to clear highways after the occurrence of highway incidents;
- (3) providing timely and accurate information about highway incidents to drivers; and
- (4) enhancing the safety and security of Ontario's highways.

It is high time that we begin to address the benefits of improving highway incident management. Let's begin by taking a closer look at some of the crippling issues that we as Ontarians face on our highways.

First of all, we all know that in Ontario, traffic is one of the biggest challenges we face. Daily commute times can sometimes reach over two hours during rush hour, preventing residents from getting to or from home and work in time for important business, personal or family events. With one of the longest commute times in North America, our government should be doing everything it can to alleviate the stress of driving on our highways.

Secondly, there are too many accidents on our highways. With so many people in a rush, drivers tend to ignore speed limits and other safety precautions, forgetting everything they have learned in driver's ed and instead opting for the fastest and most convenient, yet oftentimes not safest, choices while driving. Accidents are what take normal rush hour traffic and turn rush hour sluggish for hours.

Thirdly, emergency vehicles often have difficulty reaching accident sites quickly. This causes unnecessary delays in reopening the highways and endangers the lives of individuals affected by an accident. Slow emergency response times are detrimental to those injured by the

initial accident as well as every driver who follows behind the accident scene.

Finally, an adequate supply of modern equipment and trained staff is required to conduct effective and fast incident investigations. As it stands, incident investigators cite a lack of such equipment. This greatly increases the time required for necessary police investigations before clearing of the highway can take place.

It also means that we as a province are not keeping up with the times. Many states in the US have begun creating task forces to streamline their highway incident management protocols into manuals and useful policies that have cut average delay times in half. Florida's open roads policy has been particularly successful, and I encourage everyone to take a look at their program.

#### 1340

Other major cities such as Atlanta and Las Vegas have also adopted similar task forces in combination with their Georgia and Nevada state counterparts.

Through the establishment of a qualified committee, Ontario will obtain a more holistic understanding of best practices for highway incident management. This will include issues that are often overlooked, such as protecting emergency service workers at the scene of an accident, distinguishing roles for various types of emergency service personnel at the scene of an accident, and the extent of a public servant's liability for the actions they take while at the scene of an accident.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a couple of examples of overlooked issues when it comes to managing accidents on the highway. Some of the more obvious issues that I foresee the committee addressing are: providing generic recommendations to enhance the overall safety and security of Ontario's highways; increasing public education programs to improve driver awareness and behaviour at the scene of an accident; finding alternative and more effective methods of capturing photographs for insurance purposes; and updating and improving overall highway technology to (a) prevent accidents in all driving conditions, (b) alert future highway users to stoppages and road closures, and (c) provide alternative routes to highway users.

I recently met representatives of the 407 electronic toll route. They discussed efforts under way to implement a helicopter-type drone used to photograph major collisions in an attempt to hasten the opening of highways after an incident. This is actually a pilot project that they're working on and studying with the OPP. They use small drones in the air that shoot approximately 150 photos of each crash site. The whole process takes about 15 minutes, and it's supervised by operators on the ground that are operating the drones. The pictures are later electronically stitched together. I'm told that the same job on the ground can take up to three hours. Safety officials and incident investigators have anticipated that, in most cases, this will definitely reduce time on the scene and, in turn, the amount of time that the roads have to be closed.

There are four major issues that affect highway closure time: restoration of the highway because the

highways can be damaged by accidents; towing services—how long it takes for towing services to get to the accident scene; recovery time; and personal injuries and, unfortunately, sometimes fatalities.

These are not insurmountable problems. Setting up a committee to streamline procedures such as what equipment is necessary for what type of incident is just one of the many ways to alleviate traffic congestion as a result of an incident.

Implementing improvements to the province's highway incident management protocol should be a high priority for the government. Keeping highways fast, efficient and effective is critical to the economic prosperity of our province. Creating a committee is the first step towards establishing a more streamlined approach to what is fast becoming a rampant problem across Ontario.

The positive effects of what a committee may find with regard to improved highway incident management are numerous and substantial. They include but are not limited to:

**Improved public health and safety:** When emergency vehicles can reach the scene of an accident quickly, they can begin life-saving and highway-clearing procedures more efficiently. Reducing the number and duration of highway incidents can also have a positive impact on reducing vehicle emissions and improving air quality.

**Improved driver behaviour:** The possibility of joint public and private drivers' ed programs with sections devoted to highway accident behaviour would educate drivers on how to behave if they are caught in an incident on the highway. This would substantially improve driver awareness and help to reduce road rage or aggressive reactions from other drivers.

**Enhanced competitiveness:** Economic efficiency results when goods and labour can arrive at their destinations in a timely and predictable manner. This does not happen when incidents on the highway slow traffic. Additionally, a committee would be able to review best practices for the recovery of goods and valued objects should a tow truck be involved in an accident. I meant a truck, not a tow truck, so I apologize.

**Investment in our province:** A reputation for efficient transportation systems can be an important Ontario asset when economic development players are selling the province as an investment location.

Fewer disruptions to local communities when highways are closed: Coordinating rerouting of major highway traffic through secondary roads as required under road closure action plans can reduce the impacts on traffic flow. Better road efficiency can lead to increased private investment in transportation partnerships. With better traffic flow, private sector transportation and engineering consortia can recognize the benefits of investing in transportation projects that can lead to investments and improvements in our system of highways.

And we could be a model, obviously, for other Canadian jurisdictions.

Once an incident is detected and confirmed, the response and clearance must be managed so as to pre-

serve and protect human life, maintain a reasonable level of safety for all participants, minimize delays to the travelling public, and minimize damage to public and private property. In a major incident, these are complex and often competing factors. Successful incident management can be facilitated by high-tech equipment, but is largely dependent on inter-agency coordination, education and on-site personnel. Once again, and excuse me for sounding a bit repetitive, the establishment of a committee is the first step in streamlining all of these complicated facets.

We can do better. Other cities, states and nations have been upstaging us in this area for years. We should be ashamed at our lacklustre and hodgepodge response protocol. Right now, drivers don't even know the rules of the road. They don't know their responsibilities when they're in an accident.

What I'm asking the Ministers of Transportation and Community Safety and Correctional Services to do with the passage of Bill 30 is to convene an advisory committee that aims to tackle these issues with innovative solutions. It's time to make our highways safer and more enjoyable for all Ontarians. It's time to feel confident about our highway system, and to have a plan in place that puts Ontario back on top as a world leader in efficiency and traffic flow. It's time for Ontarians to spend more time doing the things that matter to them, instead of getting stuck behind an accident. It's time to do better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues for all their interest. It is with that in mind that I hope that all of you will support Bill 30.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's an honour to be able to stand in this House today and speak on this bill, Bill 30, an Act to require the establishment of an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for the improvement of highway incident management. I wholeheartedly support this initiative, just to start off.

For us in northern Ontario, and in southern Ontario, too—I live in a place where there's not as much traffic as here, but once a week I drive down here to have the ability to speak in this Legislature; tomorrow morning I drive back home. You have traffic problems here. You have gridlock problems. You have accident problems, and they could be better managed. But the one thing I'd like to concentrate on in the time I have is that it's not just the number of cars that causes the problem, because we also have the same problems in northern Ontario.

One of the greatest issues that I face with my constituents—we have the Trans-Canada Highway running through my constituency, Highway 11, and a large portion of it—when there's an accident there, and they have to manage the accident and investigate, and they close that portion of the highway, there's no other way to get around.



In my riding, sometimes in the wintertime, a lot of times these accidents are caused by bad road conditions. That's a whole other issue, but sometimes that highway is closed for eight or 10 hours to investigate an accident. There's no detour. You can have a young family in a car, or seniors in a car—we used to have a train; there's not much public transportation, and if you're in the bus, which wasn't wheelchair-accessible until the last couple of weeks, it's also stuck there for eight or 10 hours.

If you think about that, you're putting people's lives at risk—not just the people who are driving, but the people who are waiting. There are actually, in small communities in my riding, some volunteer organizations that are prepared for this, because they know that, if the highway is closed, there are people stranded in those cars. We have to find a better way to manage that.

**1350**

So, if and when this committee is struck, I'd like to take this opportunity to make sure that it's not just to look at where most of Ontarians are; it's to look at where all Ontarians live, and the different things they all face. I've held meetings with the OPP and with many people in the community, because we have big issues. We solved some of them, and we've solved some of them in this House. We've pushed like crazy for more snowplows. Road conditions have changed, because equipment on the roads has changed. The government has said, "Well, there are more plows on the road. It's safer." Well, in my district, when it used to be MTO, in the New Liskeard area there were 1,500 in that region. There were 1,500 plows, and now there are 1,000 in northern Ontario. I believe it was 66 and 40 in mine. Anyway, it's still less. But that's another discussion. We have to find a way to manage accidents; to manage what happens after the accident.

I'll give you an example. In my riding, just when you come off Highway 11 where I live, there's a big sign. I don't know how much this thing cost, but it's one of those like you have on the 401; you know, "Express lanes moving slowly." You know those signs. We have them, too. So they have a really big one on the Cobalt cut-off. There have been times when the highway has been closed, but they don't change the sign. If the accident is before Martin River, they let the people drive to where they're stranded. We've talked to the OPP, and they're as frustrated as we are because the OPP can't change that sign. The person who can change the sign at MTO or at the contractor's isn't on duty at night.

There are things we could look at that aren't rocket science and that aren't millions of dollars, which could make a huge difference in people's lives.

If and when this committee is struck, I hope it's not a committee that's just in an office tower somewhere here and has no real understanding of what happens in the far reaches of Ontario, because sometimes it's just as simple as giving someone the right to change a sign. It would make such a huge difference.

Again, where they put that sign: About 10 kilometres before the sign, there's a cut-off. If you take that cut-off

when the road is closed, you have to go into Quebec, but you can get to Toronto via Quebec. But once you pass that cut-off, you can't do that any longer. Do they put the big sign at the cut-off? No. They put the big sign 20 clicks past the cut-off, but then they compensate by not changing the sign anyway. Those are the things we have to look at, because in the end those things could cost people's lives. It's not just about gridlock—and gridlock is a tough thing; it's about people's lives.

I hope this committee is created, and I hope it looks at all parts of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke Centre.

It's a pleasure to stand in the Legislature this afternoon to speak to Bill 30, the reducing gridlock and improving traffic flow act. The premise of the bill is reducing gridlock and improving traffic flow, and it would require the government to create an advisory committee. Certainly the current Minister of Transportation, whom I've personally known for over 20 years—if there is anybody who is open to consultation with stakeholders and listening, it is this minister, as have other ministers. I know this minister will certainly be listening to stakeholders across the province on how we can improve our highways.

But the real essence of reducing gridlock and improving traffic flow is not simply having an advisory committee; it's about actions. This government has taken a number of actions precisely to reduce gridlock and improve traffic flow, initiatives like the move-over program. If you see a first responder, a police cruiser, at the side of the road when there's some kind of an incident, move over; ensure there are safer traffic conditions for the remaining traffic to be able to flow and so that the first responder is safe and the people they are giving assistance to can be safe. That's a very simple and a very tangible initiative that this government implemented that makes a difference every day.

Of course, accident prevention is also probably one of the best ways to reduce the issues that the member from Thornhill is raising.

I heard in the Legislature this morning the Minister of Transportation rise and announce that an additional 50 winter maintenance vehicles will be on the roads of southern Ontario. Those vehicles will be improving the road conditions for motorists throughout southern Ontario, which will lead to fewer accidents, which will lead to those roads being more passable, traffic flowing more smoothly, more quickly. That's a very tangible thing that this government is doing to improve gridlock and improve traffic flow.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Look at the other side of the map.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I understand the minister already introduced similar measures in northern Ontario last year. This government is looking province-wide at how we can improve traffic.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** See, I saved you. You can't say I've never done anything for you.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** There's a troubling echo in this chamber, Mr. Speaker, that I'm still getting used to.

Of course, another way to reduce gridlock and improve traffic flow is to build and expand our road system. This government is making unprecedented investments in 407 east, in extending the 401 corridor in the western part of this province, in extending the 404 north and many other improvements.

We've introduced HOV lanes, which also improve traffic flow and reduce gridlock.

We're introducing bus priority lanes in parts of the GTA to allow public transit vehicles that carry far more people than an individual vehicle to move more quickly, to get people to where they need to go more quickly, whether it's to work or school in the morning or home in the evening.

These are all tangible things that this government is doing to reduce gridlock and improve traffic flow, and not simply striking an advisory committee, as important and as valuable as that might be.

Of course, another key initiative to reducing gridlock and improving traffic flow is giving people other choices in how to move around this province, improving their mobility. The \$29-billion investment in public transit in the province of Ontario—\$15 billion within the GTA, \$14 billion in other parts of the province—is going to have a tremendous impact on reducing gridlock and improving traffic flow. If only another government back in the 1990s had built the public transit that was already on the books and approved at that time, we would have saved Ontarians billions of dollars in lost time and burnt fuel that could have already been saved. We could have reduced gridlock and improved traffic flow much earlier. But this government is committed to doing that and we are doing that today with construction projects which are under way on Eglinton, on the Yonge-University-Spadina line, in Mississauga, in Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa, and elsewhere throughout the province.

This government has shown more commitment to reducing gridlock and improving traffic flow than any other government in the history of this province. We will continue to do this over the next decade with our \$130-billion investment in transit and transportation. But I do welcome the member from Thornhill and her ideas on how we can do even better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I believe the member from Etobicoke Centre has some remarks as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It is a pleasure today to speak to Bill 30, the Highway Incident Management Act, brought forth by my colleague from Thornhill, Gila Martow.

1400

This act would obviously establish an advisory committee to make recommendations for the improvement of highway incident management.

There is no one in this House who hasn't experienced the frustration, the delays, the gridlock, the wasted fuel, time and money resulting from a collision, minor or major, many kilometres up the road as the long line of stopped and slowed traffic approaches the incident location. Your one-hour trip stretches into two or three, and you begin to wonder: Will you ever make it to your destination? We all understand the impacts—the missed deadlines, the missed appointments, the missed family moments—in addition to the environmental and pocket-book concerns, as our vehicles burn up the fuel and money before pouring the emissions out the exhaust pipe. There is probably not a week that goes by that motorists travelling to, from and through the GTA aren't subjected to these situations.

Instead of throwing our hands up and allowing the shared frustration to build, I commend my colleague for bringing forward some positive action steps to help get us moving in the right direction.

As we've heard, Bill 30 requires the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and the commissioner of the OPP to establish an advisory committee to analyze highway incident management and to develop a comprehensive program for improvement.

Specifically, the proposed legislation calls on the committee to report and make recommendations on the following:

- (1) public education programs to improve driver behaviour in highway incidents;
- (2) reducing the time for authorities to detect and verify incidents and clear our highways;
- (3) of course, providing timely and accurate highway incident information to drivers; and
- (4) enhancing the safety and security of Ontario highways.

Given that gridlock is still the number one issue in the GTHA, I feel that while we look at ways to provide more transportation options, it's well past time that we should examine what can be done to reduce the impact of one of the key causes of gridlock. Sadly, as long as we operate vehicles, we will never be able to avoid completely the occurrence of vehicle accidents, so we have a responsibility to ensure we are doing all we can to reduce the ensuing impacts that we see on virtually a daily basis. I think I speak for everyone in this House when I say that we could all benefit from the improved traffic flow, reduced gridlock and enhanced safety goals that are at the heart of the Highway Incident Management Act, and I look forward to seeing it receive the support of our colleagues across the floor to move this initiative forward.

Thank you, Speaker, for the time, and I'd like to thank my colleague from Thornhill again for bringing forward Bill 30.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I too want to rise in support of this legislation. I will just start off by saying that private members' hour is always a good forum by which



members such as this one are able to bring forward ideas that otherwise may not come up under the regular processes of government, to be able to bring these forward for debate in this Legislature so that we can reflect on them, hopefully pass a bill and, if not, have the government deal with the matter, either by way of a bill or by way of an initiative. I just want to say that the idea is a good one, in the sense of bringing people together in order to be able to deal with these issues.

But I want to speak to the general condition of our roads across this province as one of the issues that could be dealt with under this bill. We have seen—it started under the Conservatives when Mr. Harris was the Premier of Ontario, and then it was accelerated under the Liberals. We used to have this hybrid system of winter road maintenance where the Ministry of Transportation owned about 50% of the rolling stock necessary—not rolling stock, but sand trucks and snowplows needed to maintain our highways to a certain standard, and then the other 50% was contracted in to the ministry, by use of contractors, when needed. It was a good system, because what it did is that it allowed us to have a certain capacity as a province to clean our highways, but at the same time utilized the private sector to augment where it made some sense to do that. It was a good system, and it was a very inexpensive system, comparatively.

The Tories privatized it. The Liberals then accelerated the privatization to heights never known before, even though they were opposed to this when they were in opposition. And we now have this system where it's completely privatized, where contractors are locked into contracts, where the standards of maintaining our highways are less than what they were at the time the ministry used to maintain the roads themselves.

The way they did this—and it was Kathleen Wynne as the Minister of Transportation who did a great part of this—is that they negotiated with area maintenance contractors where they lowered the circuit time. They said, "You have to maintain highways to the classification level as described by the Ministry of Transportation in its operating manuals, and here is the way that you're going to do this." But they lowered the circuit times, which means to say the amount of time that a plow will pass by your door a second time once a snowstorm comes. In other words, if you live on Highway 17 somewhere, when the plow drives by your house because you live on the highway, it would normally come back a lot faster a second time—because the circuit time is the time it takes to do the whole route and to come back to the original point. What we've now got is that the circuit times have been, in some cases, as much as tripled.

We wonder why our highways are not maintained to the degree that they used to be before? It's very simple. The government not only privatized the system but they then told the contractors, "Here's a lesser standard to which you'll maintain the road," and then they say, "It's all your fault if the highway is not plowed." Well, it's the government who negotiated the contract. It's the government who established the lower circuit times in the

contracts, so it should be the government's responsibility to make sure that the highways are maintained.

Because of pressures put on by the public, by mayors of northern Ontario and by members such as myself, Mr. Vanthof, Madame Gélinas and others, the government went out and bought some more equipment. To that, we say, "Good." They did some of that last year; they're doing some of it again this year.

I just want to say again, if you don't lower the circuit times, we're going to have a lot more plows running around doing the same job but the circuit times are really not going to diminish. Most of that equipment is going to be used where we've got four-laning. If you have a highway that has just single lanes, the circuit time—let's say it used to be two hours—it's now probably more like four or five hours. Now what's going to happen is, they are going to at least have enough equipment on four lanes or in passing lanes in order to do it in that two to four hours, but the roads will not be any better maintained.

I hope that this particular committee, should it ever be struck, is able to do what this government needs, which is to come to terms with the issue of circuit times.

I prefer that we return to the former system, where we had our own internal plows and sand trucks in order to do the work that had to be done, and utilize contractors to augment what we did. If you're going to go to a private system, at least put into the contracts circuit times that allow us to maintain roads to the standard; otherwise, we're going to continue to see roads in the condition that they are.

Last year was atrocious, the year before that was atrocious, and those were the first years in my area where those area maintenance contracts came in place. I can tell you, our roads are dangerous. There have been accidents because of it. People are now regularly choosing not to drive whenever they see a snowflake, let alone a snowfall. Why? Because we have learned in northern Ontario that if it snows, the circuit times are going to mean that the plow is not going to come by very often and you're going to be putting yourself and others at risk by driving the highway.

I call upon the government to put inside these contracts a change that allows the circuit times to be diminished so that we are able to have the condition of highways that we were used to in this province prior to the Liberals becoming Tories in a hurry when they contracted all of this out.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's an honour to speak to this issue.

Just before I do, I'd just like to take this brief opportunity to extend my condolences on behalf of the people of Etobicoke Centre to the family of Mr. Cirillo, the soldier who was killed yesterday in Ottawa, and to extend our thanks to all the men and women in uniform in our great country, both those who protect our freedoms abroad and those who protect our safety and security here at home.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue, and I thank the member opposite for raising the issues that are touched

on in this bill. Road safety is critical; we all know that. If you haven't been personally involved, we all know someone who has been involved in some sort of road accident. I certainly have had that in my family and can appreciate the impact that that would have.

As the Premier said yesterday in a different context, the security of the people of Ontario is paramount. We need to ensure that. So is making sure that people move quickly through our roads. Whether they be in urban environments or rural environments, we need to make sure that people are moving safely, securely and efficiently. That's foundational to the strength of our economy.

1410

There are a number of things that this government is doing currently, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like to highlight. First of all, I think one of the things to look to is the fact that we have some of the safest roads in North America. The data bears this out. The Ministry of Transportation supports actions to reduce gridlock and improve traffic flow. That's because we understand that good traffic flow, safe traffic flow, is critical to our quality of life and to our economy.

Our goal should be to safely manage highway incidents as quickly as possible. We have to make sure that emergency services have arrived and that any injured parties have received care and the police have completed their investigation. This has to be paramount as we think about clearing our highways. The ministry continues to work with the Ontario Provincial Police and other stakeholders to ensure that congestion is not prolonged due to highway incidents and their investigations.

For the past 13 years, we've been ranked either first or second in North America for road safety. Despite this record, there's still more work to be done. On average, one person is killed on our roads every 18 hours and one person is injured every eight and a half minutes. There are a number of things that are being done through the ministry, and I'd like to highlight just a few of them in the remaining time I have.

The work that the ministry does with the OPP, local police services and safety stakeholders to protect motorists during campaigns that address unsafe behaviours—the ministry has run numerous awareness campaigns and has strict legislation on impaired, distracted, aggressive and careless driving. This directly contributes to protecting roadside assistance drivers, stranded motorists, enforcement officers, construction and maintenance workers and others.

MTO recently worked with the Canadian Automobile Association to develop their stranded motorists campaign. This campaign helps to educate motorists on what to do at the roadside in the event of a breakdown or a collision, which is an issue that the member opposite raised as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to look at this in a comprehensive way, and I'd like to echo the thoughts of the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore in that regard. Making sure that our roads work well and making sure

that they're safe means looking at this in a holistic way. There are a number of things that the ministry is doing and the government is doing—I've highlighted some of those—and we will be doing.

One of the things that the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore mentioned that I'd like to emphasize, as well, is the introduction of a new bill this week, the highway traffic act, which will make our roads safer. Some of the things that are part of that are: increasing fines for distracted driving from the current range of \$60 to \$500 to a range of \$300 to \$1,000—again, this is all about discouraging distracted driving, which I think we all agree is something that we need to address—applying current alcohol-impaired sanctions to drivers who are drug-impaired—this is an important aspect of this—and introducing additional measures to address repeat offenders. These are some of the things that can help us prevent accidents, prevent some of the gridlock and prevent some of the issues that the members opposite raised, in terms of people waiting for accidents to be cleared. One way of doing that is preventing the accidents in the first place, and we're doing a lot on that front.

Another thing we're doing is helping municipalities collect unpaid fines by expanding licence plate denial for drivers who do not pay their fines.

These are all elements of making sure that our roads are safer.

The other thing I want to mention, Mr. Speaker—and we were talking about the importance of a comprehensive approach—is to think about infrastructure as well. It's not just one-off pieces of legislation. We really need a broad approach. Since 2003, we've invested \$100 billion in infrastructure, and a lot of that has gone to transportation. We will be investing \$130 billion more in infrastructure over the next 10 years, \$29 billion of which is going to transportation. This is a critical element of making sure that our roads have the capacity to handle the demand that we put on them every single day, all across our province.

In summary, the issues that have been raised are important issues. I think we need to look at these issues holistically. We need to look at infrastructure. We need to look at how we're executing some of the legislation that we currently have on the books. Much of what has been mentioned in this bill is already being worked on and addressed by the Ministry of Transportation.

I think the bill, as proposed, is something that we can put through the committee process and look through what is already being done and what needs to be done, to make sure we take a comprehensive approach to addressing these issues of road safety and efficiency and effectiveness for the betterment of security of all Ontarians, and to make sure that our economy continues to thrive.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** As too many Ontario commuters know, gridlock is getting worse and worse, especially in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It is becoming



more difficult to move on our roadways. Whether it's on the highway or in the city, the movement of people and business is needlessly stalled by gridlock, costing Ontario \$6 billion in lost productivity every year. By 2031, this congestion will cost us \$15 billion in lost productivity.

**Gridlock:** The very sound of the word sends blood pressures up and patience down. Across the GTHA and beyond, more and more people turn into commuters stuck in gridlock. Their engines are running. Their frustration is growing. Their tempers are flaring. Illegal phone calls are made. And you're stuck for anywhere from 10 to 40 minutes.

Our province has a major infrastructure deficit. Ontario's transportation and transit infrastructure has not been modified and built upon to keep up with the needs of our citizens and businesses, and in no way is it ready for tomorrow. For instance, until the 404 opened to Woodbine, there had been no change in the road network, but the population has more than doubled. It has taken too long to expand our infrastructure to accommodate the growing population. We need better planning that looks to future growth, because we cannot rely on the infrastructure that we have had for the past 40 years to last another 40 years.

It is interesting to note that nearly all of Ontario's infrastructure was built by successive Progressive Conservative governments during the 20th century. Progressive Conservatives built this province. Twenty-one of the last 30 years have been governed by Liberal or NDP governments. This is the reason we have the infrastructure deficit that we do. The job was simply not done. Money was dithered and squandered away that should have built kilometres of new subway and hundreds of kilometres of new, better-designed roads.

So we don't have the appropriate transit to give drivers a real alternative to their cars. We don't have new roads that can better handle the size of today's rush-hour surges. We don't even have the railway tracks we did years ago, if we wanted to encourage rail transport.

Heavy traffic, often caused by accidents, affects the environment and people's quality of life.

The bill introduced by my colleague seeks to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations for the improvement of highway incident management. When there is an accident on our roads, anything from a stalled car, loose load, flood, fire or highway repair, the traffic flow is impacted. Many times these incidents don't seem to be managed by authorities in a way that is helpful to the other users of the road. We need to be able to solve emergencies that arise on a daily basis efficiently and in a way that lets the rest of the traffic flow easily. These highway incidents are at the root of much of the gridlock we experience.

This bill would enable an expert committee to provide recommendations for better traffic management so that we can implement solutions to mitigate the gridlock that is created by disruption and accidents. This bill will help solve some of the gridlock problem.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** As a former mayor of South Glengarry, a municipality which includes Highway 401, and a user of the highway to get back and forth to Queen's Park, I want to commend my colleague the member from Thornhill for taking up this bill. The 401 is a very important—and the 400-series highways; I don't want to limit it to the 401—a very serious and important transportation route. We should look at and must look at ways to improve the traffic and the issues around the 401.

I know that during my time as mayor, we met a number of times with the Ministry of Transportation to talk about some of the issues we had with the 401 and the problems it was causing our riding, not to talk about the traffic but just talking about some of the issues: namely, the provisioning of emergency services on the highway and the damage caused by the traffic when it was diverted to our local roads, which aren't designed for heavy truck traffic.

**1420**

We were finding that the highways were closed for many hours—sometimes as many as 10 or 12 hours if there was a fatality on the highway—issues that never used to happen. Are we closing the highway too long? If you look at the amount of commercial traffic that's held up on the highways, or the people who are inconvenienced by sitting for hours on the highway or being diverted around their local roads, it really seems to be out of control.

When an accident occurs, many times they're called up by cellphone. It can be as simple as a car in a ditch in a snowstorm or it can be a serious accident. Our firefighters are called out. Mainly, once the emergency is put aside, the OPP use this for traffic diversion. The province doesn't want to recognize that as an approved use of our emergency services, so we're not compensated for that. We'll have seven or eight men out on the highway, and no time for that unless we do some emergency work.

In some jurisdictions along the highway, they are actually going over and cutting the battery cables during an incident when there is no damage done, just so they can claim there was a possible fire and their time is compensated. Clearly, we need to have some rules and some compensation requirements. If we require the OPP for traffic help, they should have proper equipment, proper training and be compensated for it.

In one incident we had on the highway, the fire truck was rear-ended. It was taken out of service for months. We had to get it replaced—no compensation from the government. Actually, there was some concern about why we were there. We were there to direct traffic with the OPP during a storm. If we don't go out, it could be a neighbour out there or it could be somebody from Toronto who needs help. The fire department believes that if they're called out, they have to show up, because they're not really sure what the problem is.

Sometimes, we have to really look at what we're doing here. When I talk about some of the diversions and the damage on the road—we had a newly finished road. It was a SuperBuild project, with a third, a third and a

third compensation. We put a bike path in place. Within six months of finishing the road—it's a township road, not a county road and not one of the emergency roads—the 401 traffic was diverted to it during the springtime. It created ruts in the road. There was about \$500,000 damage to the road. The emergency road was clearly identified on the opposite side of the 401. No compensation. The township was forced to cover that cost—clearly a provincial responsibility.

I know I just have a few minutes left, but the other issue I'd like to talk about is winter maintenance. I brought this up before, and I know the minister has commented that it might have been Mike Harris, but new contracts were issued in 2013 where the snowplows on the highway are almost 50%, almost half. We wonder why we're having the highway closed in the wintertime for five, six, 12 hours. It's because there's not enough snow equipment available to keep these 400-series highways clear.

I've made numerous trips from Ottawa in the winter-time. Many times, I won't see a plow on the road during a storm, and I'm on the highway for more than 45 minutes. With previous contracts, there were enough plows on the highway. In those 45 minutes, you could easily have 10 or 12 inches of snow.

Anyway, my time is up. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We now turn to the member from Thornhill. You have two minutes for a response.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I want to thank my colleagues the members from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Kitchener-Conestoga, Etobicoke Centre, Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry—that's the hard one—York-Simcoe and, of course, Timiskaming-Cochrane, who made a few very good points: that it's not just in the greater Toronto area where we're seeing highway accidents closing the highways, that it's not just typical gridlock.

Accidents happen. These are people. We're not at the stage yet where we have computers driving our cars, although we're getting awfully close to driverless vehicles in the future, and that may bring in a whole other host of problems. But hopefully, we'll see less dangerous accidents on our highways when they do come in.

As was mentioned, there aren't always alternative routes. There are closures on the highways, and it could be because of water, it could be because of rails or it could be just because of road design. Maybe we have to look at that. We have to look at where the exits are, where there are alternative routes. As the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane mentioned, the billboards should be placed with WiFi or using some kind of satellite 24 hours, seven days a week. Often these accidents are on long weekends or special holidays. It shouldn't be somebody working 9 to 5 and is off for the holidays who is in charge of these electronic billboards to tell people there's an accident up ahead, and to get off at this exit.

We can definitely do better. We all agree that the technology is there and we just don't seem to be taking

enough advantage of all the new software and technology. Maybe we have to look at special response teams that will come to the scene of accidents. There's a lot more to talk about. I want to thank everybody again for all their comments.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Milczyn assumes ballot item number 15 and Mr. Balkissoon assumes ballot item number 44.

## VISITORS

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I do have some introductions to bring to you and the House. I would like to welcome today in the gallery my father, Ted Kiwala; my daughters Linnaea and Helene Kiwala; and my EA, Raly Chakarova. I would also like to re-welcome the three Kingston city police officers who stayed an extra day in Toronto to support me in this afternoon's resolution: Sean Bambrick, Jason Cahill, Ron Lehenhorst.

Sorry for doing this again; I did some of these introductions this morning. We've got Katsitsias Betty Maracle, Bear Clan, Mohawk Nation, Tyendinaga—I hope I pronounced that properly—Laurel Claus-Johnson, a Mohawk Bear Clan community grandmother, a former VP of the Ontario Native Women's Association and a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal; Bryan Bowers, a mixed settler with First Nations ancestry, is a board member of the First Nations Technical Institute in Tyendinaga Mohawk territory and a board member of the Naval Marine Archive in Picton—Bryan is a former member of the OPP and Kingston city police—Janis Hill of the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre at Queen's University in Kingston and the Islands; Betty Carr-Braint from Tyendinaga, an elder in residence at Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre at Queen's; Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, vice president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, from Peterborough, and also president of the Ontario Native Women's Association—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'm sorry, but I thought you had a very short point of order. If you want to do more introductions, I would ask that you to do it as part of your speech. I recognized it because I just had a note saying, "I have a short point of order." I'd like to carry on. On the last bill we debated—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I very much respect that these people have come here to see the debate this afternoon, and that is great. I think the time to do that, as you pointed out, is to do it within the speeches, because if we allow this to happen, every member of this House will do similar things during private members' hours and government debates, and that is contrary to our standing orders.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I respect your comments, member from Timmins–James Bay, but quite often members just send a little note and say, “I have a point of order,” and it’s very difficult for the Speaker to decide what that point of order is until I recognize the member. Everybody does it. So either we don’t do it at all or we—I’ll speak to the Speaker that we stand by the rules of the standing orders where nobody is allowed to do introductions at all on a point of order when it’s not necessary.

On the previous bill, we will take the vote at the end of private members’ public business.

1430

RYAN’S LAW (ENSURING ASTHMA  
FRIENDLY SCHOOLS), 2014

LOI RYAN DE 2014 POUR ASSURER  
LA CRÉATION D’ÉCOLES  
ATTENTIVES À L’ASTHME

Mr. Yurek moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to protect pupils with asthma / Projet de loi 20, Loi protégeant les élèves asthmatiques.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I’m glad to rise again today to discuss my private member’s bill, Ryan’s Law. A year ago this November, I introduced the bill for the first time. It had great debate, and it passed through second reading to committee.

Before I begin my debate, I’d just like to thank the people who have come down who have been supporting me throughout the past two years in getting this bill through and developing the proper legislation. They were very instrumental in getting this bill forward.

I’d like to thank the members of the Ontario Lung Association who are here with us today. Thank you for coming in. I would like to thank the Canadian Asthma Society, which has also been quite helpful, and Speaker Dave Levac, who has also been helpful behind the scenes, giving me some advice. I’d also like to thank Judy Legg, an aunt of Ryan who is here today.

In particular, I’d like to thank Ryan’s mom, who is here today: Sandra Gibbons. Sandra has shown great strength and courage and has become one of the strongest advocates I know for children with asthma. Her goal is to ensure that the tragedy that occurred in her family doesn’t occur again. Working with me, we will pass this legislation this year and ensure safety for our students throughout our school systems. Sandra, on behalf of the Legislature here, thank you for what you’re doing and thanks for coming down today.

I’d also like to take this opportunity just to give a shout-out, because I enjoy doing this. I think my daughter goes to one of the best schools in Ontario, and I’d just like to thank the teachers she has had through the years:

Mrs. Keogh, Mrs. L’Heureux, Mrs. Burgess, Mrs. Marcinkiewicz, and Mr. Austin, who taught me grade 8. That was kind of interesting, that my grade 8 teacher taught my daughter. This year she has Ms. Roy-Kaufman, who is doing an excellent job with Maggie. I’d also like to thank the school secretary, Mrs. Walt, who always seems to ensure that the school is actually running and efficient at all times, and of course the amazing principal, Mrs. Giampa, who I think has brought so much life and enthusiasm to her school, which makes it worthwhile for the kids to go every day.

We’re here dealing with Ryan’s Law. Ryan’s Law was brought about due to the tragic loss of Ryan Gibbons at his school. Two years ago this past October 9, Ryan was attending school when he underwent an asthmatic attack while out in the schoolyard. Unfortunately, Ryan was unable to reach his inhaler that was in the office of the school, and the emergency medical personnel who were on the scene were unable to revive Ryan.

Sandra and the lung association came and spoke to me about this tragedy that occurred. What had occurred, after doing research throughout the province, is that there are no standards of practice throughout Ontario where guidelines can be put in place to ensure that students with asthma have access to their medications. Some school boards and schools do an amazing job; other schools and school boards are quite inadequate. The glaring gap in the system surely shows, and we need to fix this problem. So Ryan’s Law came forward.

The basic points of Ryan’s Law, for the new members who are here:

“2(1) Every board shall establish and maintain an asthma policy in accordance with this section.

“2(2) The asthma policy shall include the following:

“1. Strategies that reduce the risk of exposure to asthma triggers in classrooms and common school areas.

“2. A communication plan for the dissemination of information on asthma to parents, pupils and employees.

“3. Regular training on recognizing asthma symptoms and managing asthma exacerbations for all employees and others who are in direct contact with pupils on a regular basis.

“4. A requirement that every school principal develop an individual plan for each pupil who has asthma. In developing an individual plan, the principal shall take into consideration any recommendations made by the pupil’s health care provider.” A health care provider, as defined in this bill, is any health care professional working under their scope of practice.

“5. A requirement that every school principal inform employees and others who are in direct contact on a regular basis with a pupil who has asthma about the contents of the pupil’s individual plan.

“6. A requirement that every school principal ensure that, upon registration, parents, guardians and pupils shall be asked to supply information about asthma.

“7. A requirement that every school principal maintain a file of current treatment and other information for each pupil with asthma, including a copy of any notes and

instructions from the pupil's health care provider and a current emergency contact list."

Mr. Speaker—or Madam Speaker; you changed on me—the key part of this bill is to ensure that students have direct access to their asthma medication. Those who are 16 and under will have the permission of their parent or guardian to carry it on them. For those who are 16 and over, it's their choice. Of course, there will be detailed instructions at the office as to where the spare inhaler is kept, if it is at all—I recommend highly that spare inhalers be at the school—so that we can keep track of where the inhalers are.

A lot has been said about Ryan. You might think that's just the one story that has come forward, but I've had lots of stories come through my office. One story that came through during the campaign last year: the story of a 7-year-old girl who takes a bus to her school in my riding—a different school than where Ryan went. She, too, is not allowed to have her inhaler on her; it's in the principal's office. She experienced an asthmatic attack on the school bus, on the way to school. If she had been allowed to carry her inhaler, it would have been in her bag or in her pocket and she could have dealt with the asthmatic attack at that point. However, she had to endure the school bus ride to the school, get off the school bus, find a teacher, have that teacher go to the office and then open the door and get the asthmatic puffer. Thankfully, it wasn't a life-or-death situation—although waiting long enough during an asthma attack to get your medication can turn into a life-threatening situation.

So it's not just a one-off situation; it's occurring many times in my ridings, and believe you me, I've received emails from each and every one of your ridings over the last year. It's happening in your ridings as well.

The other thing I've heard, which I thought I'd just bring up, is the reason why we need to increase the education about asthma in our school system. Far too often, I have heard of a child undergoing an asthmatic attack and having to go to the office and sit in a chair for five minutes just to make sure they weren't fooling around or didn't need their medication. To do that to a person suffering an asthmatic attack is horrendous. An understanding of the disease that the person has—to make them wait an extra five minutes is unheard of, and it needs to end. My bill will end that.

Speaker, I also launched a website, [passryanslaw.com](http://passryanslaw.com). I've had tremendous success in the month that it has been out there. I've had over 500 supporters—252 endorsements, 382 signatures—and that's just online. I have had thousands upon thousands of written petitions handed over to me. This bill has support across the province. I'm reaching out to the members of this Legislature to come forward and support the bill going further.

I would also like to just briefly touch upon one thing that was raised after question period today, and that's with regard to OPHEA, which received government funding last year to study all disease states and how they'd be working within our schools. My fear is that this bill might be put off in order to try to facilitate all the

disease states into one bill. I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I think that would be a bad choice. There are numerous reasons. The first reason: You can't treat disease states the same; otherwise, doctors would have been doing this for years. Each disease state has its own set of goals to reach to attain different treatment methods. To make a one-size-fits-all blanket statement kind of copies what happened to poor Ryan. His medication was under a blanket statement that we treat all medications the same. You can't do that with disease states, and I would hope OPHEA would understand that going forward, and maybe they could release a statement in support of Ryan's Law, which I haven't seen. Perhaps they can move forward and focus on the other disease states.

The second item I would like to point out is that one in five children in our province has asthma. Twenty per cent of our children have asthma. This bill is going to improve the safety of 20% of our children at school. One out of every five children will be better protected at our schools and have access to their medication. Their disease will be understood. I think that's one of the main reasons to get this bill passed. If you look back at diabetes and epilepsy, you're looking at maybe 2% to 3% of the population. I'm not saying they're not worth it. I think we should have legislation to look after those students going forward, but this bill is ready to roll and protect 20% of our students in our system.

Hopefully, we'll get through second reading today and get it through committee and come back for third reading so that next September this bill will be law. Later on, down the road, if we add diabetes and epilepsy—if you want to put things together, let's work towards that, but why put off a bill that's going to protect 20% of our students for another year or two or three years? Who knows how long it's going to take to develop the other legislation? Why waste the time?

**1440**

I've just got a few minutes, and I'm going to read some of the endorsements that I received from my website, which I think are pretty good.

First off—and this is just reflective of my riding, but I would imagine it might reflect across your ridings—the county of Elgin sent me a letter this week:

"We understand that Bill 20, Ryan's Law, will have a second reading debate before the Ontario Legislative Assembly on Thursday, October 23, 2014. Elgin county council strongly supports this private member's bill, and at its county council meeting on October 21, it unanimously passed the following resolution: that Elgin county council supports private member's Bill 20, Ryan's Law (Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools)"—carried unanimously, signed by Warden David Marr.

I thank Elgin county. I imagine municipalities across this province would do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I have one glaring endorsement here that I'd also like to read into the record, from my website, [passryanslaw.com](http://passryanslaw.com), that I think speaks to the discussion that might come forward later today. It's from Howard. He notes:



"A policy that ensures the safest and most fulfilling experience possible for our children at school should be a foregone conclusion. That policy being consistently applied across the entire province is essential for those people who need to apply it and those who hope to benefit from it. An understanding that as science and we as people change, so too must these policies, regardless of how good we think they are when we put them in place, ensures that we can support the first two needs. Don't wait for perfection in this bill; do the best we can and be prepared to revisit regularly. It will eventually apply to more than puffers, but it is a place to start. Do not let it get so complex that it takes forever to happen. Please get it done."

I have plenty more of these to read, but I think that hits it right home.

Let's get this bill done. Let's do it today. Let's get it through committee. Let it become law. Let's protect our students.

*Interruption.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. I would just remind the members in the gallery that you're here to observe and not participate in any cheering or comments.

Further debate.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I would like to start off by congratulating the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for his hard work on this file. He has continued to go after this for a long time, and I certainly hope he gets to where he'd like to go.

I rise to speak to my colleague's bill that will provide support and protection for those students who suffer from asthma. The bill will ensure that principals, teachers, administration and, hopefully, other students, will be aware of the student's asthma and what triggers the attacks. Just being aware of why a student is reacting in a certain way will go a long way to ensuring that immediate measures are taken to help the student when they are in distress.

On a general level, requiring each educational facility to have an asthma policy, regularly updated, is a good first step. But having an individual action plan to ensure that each person in a school knows what to do when a student goes into a reaction should provide the immediate attention that will likely save their life. But that's at the micro, very personal, individual level.

The bill also requires a board to have a general asthma policy. This policy will require the board to take measures to reduce the triggers for asthma. The issue, I believe, is something that the ministry should take a leading role in.

It could require that materials used in new and renovation construction are as free of asthma-causing properties as possible.

It could require that fields on school property are kept well-mowed and that mowing be done at the end of the school day.

It could require that all schools and educational facilities be perfume-free. That's for everything from

personal scents to scented soaps, cleaning products and any other items on the property.

It could require that at least one window in every classroom be an opening window so that the classroom's air could be easily cleared out and affect only that classroom.

These are general things that the ministry could require long before a student would need to fear entering an educational facility to find out if they will be reacting to something in the facility.

Once all those measures have been taken, then the individual student plan needs to be a priority for each school. Again, the bill requires a communication plan that will send information to every parent about the board's and the school's asthma plan. In this communication, items such as what cannot come to school with students, like scented items, would be very clearly set out. The board's procurement policy would already have established scent-free products and would add general indicators for the asthma students at that school without the need to individually identify each one.

From that point, each classroom teacher will include in an individual health plan what the issues are for those students. At this point, all staff at the school must be made aware of the problems and what action is to be taken when a reaction occurs. Not only will the staff need to know, but the students in the classroom must be aware so that should a reaction occur when a teacher or staff is not immediately available, like in the schoolyard or somewhere else, the students know how to get started to help their classmate.

Although the bill would require principals to keep the medical information, I believe that the classroom teacher and any supply teacher must have the information available in the classroom so they can react accordingly.

Part of the teacher's responsibility becomes how to make other students aware of the asthma, how to recognize an attack and how to ensure that they know what to do when it happens. But adding this responsibility to all of the other duties that teachers have piled on them is quite a burden. It's not that they don't want to provide the best support possible for asthmatic students, but why would we assume they do, or for that matter should, have the skills to ensure the correct information and action plan is in place? In the case of extreme medical conditions, it is really too much to expect a teacher will get every necessary detail right in a panic situation.

I believe that parents should take the responsibility to write up the student's individual action plan, work on it with the teacher for age-appropriate wording and required action, and then present it to the principal, then students and staff. This way, it will provide the opportunity for the parents to be assured that the plan will best respond to their children's needs and will provide the comfort for the teacher that everything necessary has been done and included. This may not be the best solution, but something along these lines when it comes to the individual plan should be put into place.

The issue around storage of the student's medication could be a concern, depending on the type of medication the student needs. Of course, the immediacy of access to the medication will need to be fully assessed before any plan can be implemented. If the parent is involved in all of this planning, then the best outcome can be easily achieved.

It is a significant responsibility for teachers, staff and other students to be required to administer what could be life-saving medication. One of the strategies that has been used in some Toronto elementary schools for students who use assistive devices is to have a team for each student. These teams are trained by the appropriate persons on how to assist the student to get out in case of an emergency. I envision a similar system that would be in place to help a student who is suffering from an asthmatic attack. If it is in the schoolyard, the student support team would be able to assist the student into the school and to the medicine storage place and even be able to help the student administer it. I'm not saying that this is an ideal solution, but we need to explore many different plans so that when a particular school has students with more than one type of asthma reaction, they have the necessary plans to get ready for it.

When this bill comes before the committee for deliberations, I'm sure that the advocates, parents and asthmatic students themselves will present their best plans and solutions to react to their needs. I expect that many of these will find their way into the regulations that will accompany this bill.

I commend my colleague on taking steps to help ensure that the safety of our children in school settings is done. It is an important duty for all MPPs to do their best to put in place the systems that will provide maximum protection for all children in Ontario. We in the NDP will be supporting this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I'll be sharing the time with the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to endeavour to follow through on one of my commitments that I made to the constituents in my beautiful riding of Cambridge. As a nurse with over 30 years' experience, including pediatrics, critical care and home care, I felt there should be more health professionals in the Legislature to be able to speak to and influence policies and legislation regarding health issues. Furthermore, as a mother who raised a child with severe lung disease, including asthma, I knew that perhaps I was uniquely placed to bring a health care perspective to debates such as this one regarding ensuring asthma-friendly schools, or Ryan's Law. It is a great privilege to be elected to do just that here today.

For the first 10 years of my nursing career, I was at the Hospital for Sick Children just down the road, on the infant medicine ward. At that time, asthma care was inconsistent across Ontario—I'm talking about the early 1980s—and from doctor to doctor. It was not as effective

as it could be and was a cause for a great number of pediatric admissions to hospital. Indeed, at peak times of the year, we not only reported the daily census on the ward, we also reported daily about how many patients were admitted with asthma to SickKids.

**1450**

Early in my nursing career, asthma and its prevention and treatment was a focus for many studies and much education across the medical field in trying to have a consistent, effective approach to asthma treatment for all Ontarians. I would guess that nurses graduating today would not recognize the medication regime commonly used to treat asthma in the 1980s. It has certainly advanced since then.

When I started working at SickKids, I learned quickly that, although asthma was becoming more prevalent among Ontario's children, complacency was dangerous. Children, in particular, could move rapidly from mild wheezing to a crisis that called for immediate intervention that sometimes included life-saving ventilation.

Speaker, my own son was one of these children. Rory's lung condition was more involved than just asthma, but his condition could change in a matter of minutes that required emergency treatment that included frequent inhalations of medication. It was a scary time for him and us, as parents. He spent many months in hospitals at a time. When he was discharged for a time, he would return to school.

Rory was taught at a very young age how to recognize an impending crisis with his breathing, learned how to administer his own medications and in what order and how to basically manage his disease. He had quite a rigid schedule of prescribed medications that he had to take to school. Due to his brittle condition, he was in control of his medication, starting in the very early grades, and the principals and the teachers at his school supported him, working together with us and his medical team to manage his own care. It was essential for him to do this, as he was often away from us at school or in hospital. It also gave him autonomy to manage his own disease and gave his family more confidence that he could avoid a crisis, or at least slow it down until he could seek urgent medical attention. Fortunately, due in large part to the excellent medical care that he received here in the province of Ontario, Rory now lives and works in Europe, and continues to manage his chronic lung condition very well.

Our government takes the health and welfare of all of our students very seriously. That is the reason why the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Education support the partnership of the public health school asthma program and our public health units. Because of these partnerships, asthma care has improved significantly in the past few years, resulting in more consistent medical treatment among asthma sufferers and fewer admissions to hospital.

Our partners the Ontario Lung Association and the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, or OPHEA, have developed a new guide, 7 Simple Steps to



Make Schools Asthma-Friendly, to help the principals and teachers recognize and respond to the needs of children with asthma. It was released on May 7, 2013. Under the Education Act, a principal is required “to give assiduous attention to the health and comfort of the pupils.” Ryan’s Law replicates Sabrina’s Law, from 2005. Similar bills have been tabled to address other health conditions.

Our government recognizes that it is not always practical to respond to each individual health concern with a separate piece of legislation. Some organizations, including OPHEA, have indicated that they would like to see a more comprehensive approach to the management of multiple medical conditions, and will be part of this very important conversation. This approach would be less onerous for school boards to actually implement.

We are exploring options to address an array of medical conditions through a coordinated and comprehensive strategy that will ensure that our children across the province of Ontario will be safely cared for, at home and in schools. Supporting this legislation that will strengthen our schools’ ability to respond quickly to students with urgent medical needs should be a collaborative effort by all members of this House. I thank the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for his hard work on this issue.

I look forward to ensuring that all members of this House collaborate to ensure that legislation that benefits these students and their schools is advanced in a timely manner.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Usually, I’m pleased to stand to speak to a bill in this Legislature, but it is with a certain sadness that I speak to a bill that is the outcome of a tragic event.

Let me first reach out to the family of Ryan Gibbons and extend my condolences. No parent should have to endure the pain of loss because of ill-conceived rules. It is a shock to me that the silos of red tape and bureaucratic isolation make this bill necessary.

It is obvious to me that anyone, children and adults, should have easy access to their prescribed medical devices or medicine. I know, for instance, that our Speaker has been a great advocate of health safety in the schools and, in 2005, introduced Sabrina’s Law, a bill that ensures all school boards have policies or procedures in place to address anaphylaxis in schools. I believe that Ryan’s Law has at least equal importance. It must pass in order to protect children and to potentially save children’s lives in Ontario.

According to the Lung Association, asthma affects as many as one in five children in Ontario, and there are about 100 deaths in Ontario each year from asthma. We need a consistent policy in place across Ontario so that all children who are affected by asthma will be able to access the medication they need in case of emergencies at schools.

Puffers need to be on the student, in their pocket. Ryan suffered an asthma attack in the schoolyard. He was not

in the classroom or the gym class. It was too far away to quickly access his inhaler. This should never have been the case. Asthma attacks can happen any time, any place, not necessarily just in the classroom or a schoolyard. Perhaps a child is walking to school or catching a bus. They should be able to access a puffer if they need to use it, regardless of time or place.

Children are taught how to properly use inhalers and should not need permission before administering an easy-to-use life-saving drug. I know, certainly, in my own family, children have grown to adulthood, but they have also had their puffer with them.

As elected members of this Legislature, we carry a great amount of influence, and we should use this influence to make positive changes. We have the power to create an environment consistent across this province where children are safe in schools and parents know they don’t have to worry about their children’s lives being in danger. School should be regarded as a safe haven for children, and we have the responsibility to make schools across Ontario safe places to learn.

I’m very pleased to be able to add my voice in support of this bill and urge all my colleagues in the Legislature to do the same today. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To our guests, the Ontario Lung Association, and to our guests who are here for the next bill that’s going to be discussed: I just want to be very clear about what’s happening here today.

First of all, we have a majority government. A majority government gets its way; the opposition has its say. That’s the simple reality. The majority government can do anything they want. That’s the simple reality.

Today, we are listening to bills put forward by the opposition, and in particular, this one—remember, we’re talking about a bill where a child died. A child died. The member has brought it forward before. It has gone to committee, it has been amended, and it’s coming back here again. What is he asking for?

My son had asthma and was one of the one-in-five children who had asthma. He’s now adult and grew out of it. But we’re not asking for the government to look at the climate conditions, the environment, which of course we know has an input into asthma. We’re not asking them to monitor the air quality in our schools. What we are asking them—what the member is asking the government to do—is a very, very small thing: It’s to allow children to carry their medications with them into the classroom, and to ask the schools to have a policy to support children who have asthma.

This is very simple. It’s very, very small, and yet, year in and year out, members come back again to table this bill. I can tell you now: It’s going to pass, and I’m sure your bill will pass too. What will that mean? It won’t mean anything. It will mean nothing, unless this government actually puts weight behind this and actually does something about it.

1500

That's what we're talking about here, because we are elected members from our constituencies, and in this case we are talking about a child who has died. It's no small matter for the family. It's no small matter for all of those other families with children with asthma. We're not asking for a great deal here. The member is not asking for much—asking for a very small action on the part of a government that has been in power for 11 years. Eleven years. Should I repeat that? Eleven years.

What we're asking for from this government—we're not asking them to change the air quality. We're not asking them to do much. We're asking that they allow a little child to walk into their classroom with their medication that they can use to save their life, to prevent another death, and that the schools have policies to help that child.

This is why people give up on politics. This is why our electorate is so cynical about sending us here in the first place. They say, "Why should we bother going into the booth and checking off anything?" Because all we're asking are simple things. "We're sending members with a passion"—this is the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London's passion. "We ask for simple steps to be done, and we can't even get that. What's the point?"

I understand their cynicism. We met that cynicism at the door. We did—all of us. I recognize it, I acknowledge it, and I actually give it credence. I say, "I hear you; I understand," because when we can't get this simple action accomplished, there is a problem. There is a problem with the system. There is a problem with this government. It's not enough, I will say, to pass this bill today—which I think we will. That means nothing. What we need to see is some freaking action—"freaking" is a parliamentary word, Mr. Speaker—out of this government. That's what we need to see.

This poor member, God bless his cotton socks, who has gone through all of this to get to this point for a family who has lost a child—we're talking about a child's death here—can't get this government to act on a simple reality. This is pathetic. This is sad, and to every Liberal member over there: I will hold you accountable. I know it's your cabinet, I know all the decisions come out of the corner office, but it's you who put pressure on your cabinet. You need to put pressure on your cabinet to make sure this happens because this is not a lot to ask. This is not a lot to ask. This is the very minimum that could be asked.

I think it's very distressing. It's an actual condemnation of our process, and it's certainly a condemnation of this government. If we cannot not only pass it here, because that's just lip service—if by the end of this Liberal term, this is not in place, may the families of all those children, the one in five who have asthma, be knocking on your doors, telling you what they think. This is truly democracy at work, or not.

So I commend the member for going through—we've all been through this. We commend him for trying his hardest to make this happen. We ask the government to make it happen.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak about the proposed legislation from my colleague opposite. Let me begin my remark by acknowledging the family of Ryan Gibbons and your loss as well. I also want to thank my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London for his compassion on this issue. I think it's maybe the pharmacist in you coming out in your advocacy work to support the safety and health of all Ontarian children.

Let me begin my remarks wearing my multiple previous hats before I came to the Legislature. As a former trustee for the Toronto District School Board, as a former public health nurse for the city of Toronto and York region, and as a former chair of the health committee with the Toronto District School Board, I can tell you that this proposed bill has merits.

However, everybody in this House knows, as much as my colleague from Parkdale–High Park said that the Legislature has a role to play, blah-blah-blah, that every publicly funded school board has the ability to pass this law—a policy.

Let me share with you—I know I mustn't bring props, Mr. Speaker. Halton District School Board has an asthma protocol. As a former chair of the health committee, I got the Toronto District School Board to pass a type 1 diabetes protocol. It took three years to develop. It was the first school board in Canada with a type 1 diabetes protocol.

To say what the member opposite is saying, that we're waiting a lot of time, do we not wait until OPHEA do their great work with the government: There is a responsibility of the Thames Valley District School Board to have this policy passed. We know that. They have a responsibility.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, there should be no heckling. It's my turn to speak.

On October 27, there is an election. There is an election on Monday. There are leadership concerns. The school board has the ability to develop policies ensuring the health and safety of the students.

Collectively, what the Minister of Education is saying is that we need to look comprehensively. There are multiple chronic conditions that students in our classrooms have. We talked about Sabrina's Law, which we passed several years ago. We have students in our system with type 1 diabetes, epilepsy and other chronic conditions. They are in our classrooms, folks. There is FASD, that I know the member opposite talked about earlier. However, it is considered behavioural—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd ask the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London to come to order.



**Ms. Soo Wong:** Let me share with the members in the House right now research done last year, a master's thesis by Nicola Thomas—I'm going to show it to her former colleague—"Asthma Management Practices in Two Ontario School Districts." What she found was very interesting. Despite the fact that, yes, there are very good pieces of the legislation—I think there are merits to it—in her study, "Almost 60% of administrators," meaning principals, "reported parents not identifying students with asthma..."

Furthermore, although parents have an obligation to notify the school of the child's condition, many don't. I know that the proposed legislation I am reading here—the member opposite said there's an obligation for parents to inform the school board.

Many of us come from very diverse communities, and many parents might not even know their child has asthma. Yes, there is an obligation to share medical information, but not every parent is prepared to disclose their child's health condition, or they might not even know that the child has the medical condition called asthma.

The other piece here is that I also want to remind the members opposite that there is, in the proposed legislation, the role and responsibility of employees. Any time you deal with employees—I want to know where this proposed legislation is talking about education and training. Furthermore, the collective agreement will come out. I can tell you that when we were drafting the proposed policy on type 1 diabetes with the Toronto District School Board, there were extensive negotiations with all the unions—not just the teachers' union, but also CUPE etc.—to make that we followed those collective agreements as well.

At the end of the day, while I appreciate the member opposite and his passion about this issue, the proposed legislation has to be considered, because asthma is not just a chronic condition. We have to talk about asthma education, and asthma control and management. That's where we need to work with the experts from the Hospital for Sick Children, the Lung Association, the Asthma Society of Canada and others, because at the end of the day, it's not just one-off. We need to look at it comprehensively, because we do know, unfortunately, many, many data that prove, that show, there are Canadians—young people in our classrooms—with asthma conditions. It's not just about the policy. We've got to make sure everybody knows the signs and symptoms of an asthma attack and how to prevent it, and do the education, because at the end of the day, we all want to make sure every child is safe in the classroom.

1510

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It's a pleasure to rise today and stand in support of my colleague and my seatmate here, the member from Elgin—Middlesex—London, on Bill 20, better known as Ryan's Law (Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools).

My colleague spoke very passionately in his opening remarks about the bill being inspired by the loss of 12-

year-old Ryan Gibbons. Ryan's mom and some of his family are here today. I thank them for being here and staying involved and being persistent.

Ryan was the typical young boy. He loved keeping active, riding his bike and playing with his friends; his asthma didn't slow him down. But like many children, he suffered an asthma attack and, sadly, Ryan passed away.

Ryan's Law has a noble purpose, and it's to make all schools across the province asthma-friendly environments. It's something that each of us takes very seriously, and I'm pleased that the bill is reintroduced here today.

The member from Scarborough—Agincourt—and we were both nurses in our past lives, I say—has made some articulate comments on asthma, but I think you have to understand that asthma blocks your airways. It's an immediate need for treatment. You see young children today; they are very versed, especially when they have asthma. They know what an asthma attack is and how to use their puffers. She made some comments about other health diseases that some of our children do have in our schools. I have to say that each disease, each disorder, has to be treated differently. Asthma, as I have said—and as many nursing colleagues who may be the Legislature know, in Maslow's hierarchy of needs air is number one. You have to get air in the lungs to survive.

My colleague mentioned how many children do have asthma and are affected by asthma, and it's one in five, which is huge. It's a common chronic condition. An individual in Ontario has a 34% risk of developing asthma before they reach 80 years of age.

My colleague, again, was speaking of her past with the Toronto District School Board. The member from Elgin—Middlesex—London has made a great stand, to say that with the rest of the school boards not everybody's on the same page. There's a patchwork across the province. Children aren't protected. Is that not our goal as legislators, to put legislation in to protect children, to the best of our ability?

This piece of legislation makes total sense. I've just tried to explain plainly the fact that asthma is a condition that needs to be treated right away. Young children—I'm so amazed about how they have the knowledge of their puffers and how they can use them. It is location—where you are. In this case, Ryan was in the schoolyard. He was far away from his puffer—too far away—and we all know, sadly, what happened.

So putting a law in that requires every school board to establish and maintain an asthma policy, to educate the teachers, principals and vice-principals about the strategy—so no one has a fear if they have to come and help a child who has asthma. There are communication plans. No, it doesn't come overnight, but my colleague has brought this forward many times. There has been lots of discussion. We have here the Lung Association today, which has been involved—

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I've been working with them.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Right. He's been working with them. How many years has this been going on? Two years?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Two years.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Two years now, so it's not like we just came out of the blue. This has been worked on with many school boards, with the Lung Association. There has to be some credence in what we're saying. Protecting children should be a priority. This is a priority bill that needs to be dealt with.

Just to prove even further, my colleague has started a website, *passryanslaw.com*, from which he read some of his comments today.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** The members should go look at it.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yes, we do encourage the members from the government side to look at this, to see the difference that we can make.

This bill makes total sense to help the school boards, but most of all to protect our children; and that as legislators is what our primary task is. He's brought a very thoughtful and needed piece of legislation forward, and I hope he enjoys all-party support later in the day.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's absolutely a pleasure and privilege to be here to support my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex—London, Jeff Yurek, a pharmacist by trade.

He brought this bill here, Ryan's Law—Bill 20 now—in November 2011. Due to his determination, he's now working with the Lung Association and continues to bring it. I just can't fathom why the Liberals would not expedite this, why they would not have brought it forward the first time he brought it and get it in so that every one of our children in our schools has the same ability to protect themselves and their health first and foremost.

I'd like to truly acknowledge the advocacy work of Ryan's mom, Sandra Gibbons, who is in the crowd today. To me, it's amazing that she would step up and show the bravery to bring this and to continue to try to support and move a law forward on the legacy of her son, whom she lost, so that other parents or children would never have to go through this.

In her words, "Unfortunately, I stand here today trying to get this bill—Ryan's Law—in place so that nobody else has to feel how I feel every day, and that's missing my son."

Speaker, I just can't fathom how we couldn't move this forward and get it into law as soon as we possibly can.

Again, kudos to the Lung Association. Obviously, we know that they're going to be standing behind this. Hopefully, we can move this forward with their help and get it to law as soon as we can.

In my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, one of my constituents, Mary Lynne Kennedy-McGregor, wrote: "Please put your full resources and support behind the passing of Bill 135. We cannot afford to have another death, another grieving family, when simple measures can be enacted to prevent another child from not being able to reach their life-saving medication in time. I hope that I can count on your support."

"Sincerely,

"Mary Lynne Kennedy-McGregor" from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Speaker, our whole reason for getting up in the morning, or certainly my whole reason for getting up in the morning, is about health care, for the most part, and all the other things we do, but health care—and something that, to me, is so simple: a law that's going to protect every child out there who happens to have asthma.

One of the colleagues across the floor said, "Well, you can do it." Obviously, other school boards haven't done it. There are very few in the province that actually have even thought of doing it. So this is one of those cases where the government should come in and try to move forward. If they're not prepared to step up, then this is something that I believe government has the ability to do and should be doing.

It's incumbent upon us to ensure our children have immediate access to quick-relief medicine in case of an asthma attack at school. Ryan's Law would do just that: no more patchwork quilt but an across-the-province law that would ensure that a student can carry their own asthma medication, a life-saving medication, with them at all times.

I cannot believe that there's any reason why any one of the 107 legislators that are in this House would not vote to expedite this and get it to become law as quickly as possible. If they do, I think they need to speak to a parent in their riding or in my riding and answer to them. They should speak with Ms. Gibbons very frankly and tell her why they would not stand in this House and support approval of this bill.

It's absolutely mind-boggling that we have something that, to me, is pretty simple to enact. We spend all kinds of time on other legislation that's never going to really be of benefit, at the end of the day, to all people when one like this is, and we don't move forward with it. We have an estimated 500,000 children, apparently, across Ontario who have asthma. How can we not do something that's going to help an estimated 500,000 of our greatest treasure, our children?

Again, I commend my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex—London. This is the second time he's brought it. Hopefully, it's the last time he's going to have to bring it.

Government: I implore you, Liberals, to bring to it forward to the House for the third and final reading. Get this vote done, get this into law and make our children the absolute priority of why we come here every day.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Elgin-Middlesex—London, you now have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I apologize for my outburst, but I am quite passionate on this topic, and when the member was speaking over there, she was quite wrong in basically everything she said.

However, I'd like to thank the members from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Cambridge, York—Simcoe; Parkdale—High Park—a very excellent speech; Scarborough—Agincourt, even though she was off base;



Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, and of course, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

The reasons thrown at me from the Liberal government as to why this bill is wrong actually emphasize my point of why we need this bill. The one member made a point that this government does not look at single-source disease states to treat in our schools too often. They wait and wait and wait.

She made mention that Sabrina's Law passed in 2005. We're in 2014, nine years later, and how many other disease states have they looked after in our school system? Zero. How many children have had to be rushed to hospital? Immense numbers. How many children died? Too many.

1520

Mr. Speaker, it speaks for itself. Now is the time to actually deal with an issue in our school system, instead of putting it off, and support this bill to come back.

I'd also like to give a little education to the members of the Legislature. Some have brought this forward like it would be an everyday event going on in the schools. Let me tell you: Most children with asthma are treated with a steroid inhaler, which is twice a day, morning and night, not at the school. So that puffer would never be at the school or have a reason to be. If the child is sick and needs it more often, they should stay home until they're feeling better. We're talking about the emergency reliever medication. Most children with asthma are controlled, which means they are going to have to use this asthma medication very rarely, if at all. In fact, if they use the medication more than once or twice a week, they're not in control and they need to go to the doctor with their asthma plan that's already there in order to amend their medications so that it's not going to be necessarily used every day.

We are asking for a Ventolin inhaler to be at the school in case of a life-and-death situation for our children at home, and you guys might be blocking this. Think about that when you're in your cabinet meeting going forward.

This bill can come back. We can save lives. Let's do it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. I will take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, Ontario supports the National Aboriginal Organizations' call on the federal government for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and severity of the issue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to begin by recognizing the Native Women's Association of Canada, NWAC, which was one of the first organizations to break the silence and shed light on the issue of disproportionate violence against aboriginal women and girls with the Sisters in Spirit project. NWAC gave faces and voices to the statistics, to the sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins and aunts whose lives were tragically cut short.

For the past month, I have displayed NWAC's faceless doll panels in my constituency office and travelled the Kingston community with them to help spread awareness about this issue. Every faceless doll is unique and was created to give a visual representation of each of the known cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada who have become faceless victims of crime.

My visits with representatives of the aboriginal community to school classrooms and organizations in Kingston and the Islands were emotionally overwhelming experiences. They brought me yet closer to imagining the lives of these beautiful women and inspired me to bring this motion forward.

One of these women was Nicole. Nicole was murdered in Winnipeg, in October 2003, at the age of 32. She left behind three beautiful children, aged nine, seven, and 16 months, to be looked after by their grandmother, a constituent of mine, who bravely shared her story at the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory Sisters in Spirit vigil this fall. Her story is one of far too many.

I know that the members of this House are well aware of this ongoing human rights issue in Canada. Today, I call on the members of the House to support my motion for a national public inquiry for three main reasons:

While violence against all women worldwide continues to be a grave concern that deserves our utmost attention, we must recognize the disproportionate representation of female aboriginal victims in Canada.

In Canada, the homicide rate is almost seven times higher for aboriginal women than for non-aboriginal women. In Canada, aboriginal women are 3.5 times more likely to be victims of violence than non-aboriginal women. In Canada, aboriginal women are almost three times more likely to be killed by a stranger than non-aboriginal women.

From 2005 to 2010, the Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit initiative uncovered 582 cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls. In May of this year, the RCMP released their own report, which examined the issue across all police jurisdictions in Canada. The report found 1,181 police-reported incidents of aboriginal female homicides and missing aboriginal females between 1980 and 2012, more than double the initial NWAC findings.

The RCMP research shows that 16% of all female homicide victims are aboriginal, astonishing when one considers that aboriginal women represent only 4% of the national female population. The NWAC report showed us that just over half of these homicides involve women and girls under the age of 31; 17% are aged 18 years or younger, and 88% were mothers.

The second reason: This issue transcends communities, provincial borders and partisan lines. As such, we must address it as a nation. We have failed to close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians in health care, housing, education, employment and social services.

We sought to assimilate aboriginal peoples into our own image, to eliminate their individual identities and shame their cultures as inferior to ours, yet aboriginals remain strong, resilient and proud. A national inquiry will begin to rebuild Canada's international reputation in the realm of human rights.

In July of this year, a report of the United Nations' special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples examined the situation of indigenous peoples in Canada. The following is a quote from that report: "It is difficult to reconcile Canada's well-developed legal framework and general prosperity with the human rights problems faced by indigenous peoples in Canada, which have reached crisis proportions in many respects."

A national inquiry, such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the 2008 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, will help increase public awareness and understanding of the issue, and help to uncover the many underlying and systemic and social causes that make aboriginal women and girls more vulnerable to violent situations.

It is undeniable that factors such as the general impacts of colonization, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, institutional and individual racism and sexism, poverty, addiction, insecure housing and lack of economic opportunities are some of the underlying causes that increase aboriginal women's vulnerability to violence. However, a national inquiry would help determine the impact of each factor and identify how those factors produce or reinforce the economic, social and political marginalization of aboriginal women in Canada.

Third, a national inquiry will give voice to aboriginal families by providing an opportunity to share their public stories and learn from their experiences in a public forum. It will ask and answer difficult questions. It will gather data and provide independent analysis. Listening to the testimony of the families, the service and care agencies, the police and the input of advocacy groups will help to identify where mistakes were made and begin the discussion on the necessary long-term solutions.

1530

Revealing the underlying causes of aboriginal women's vulnerability to violence can also help raise public awareness and increase political will. Ultimately, it can result in meaningful action focused on providing resources that mitigate the circumstances that lead to violence against aboriginal women and girls. This approach will help uncover instances where aboriginal women were treated differently and identify the ways that we as a society have failed these women. It can help begin to break down the mistrust that exists between aboriginal communities and our public institutions. A national public inquiry will provide a degree of closure to

the families of the victims and will help facilitate healing and reconciliation.

It is time to prioritize aboriginal women's and girls' safety and address the underlying causes that increase their vulnerability and exposure to violence. Each one of us here as policy-makers has a responsibility to take action on this issue. Begin by taking action here today. It is imperative that we show solid leadership on this issue as a country.

I'm exceptionally pleased that we have invested \$2 million over two years to support the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women. This group includes five aboriginal organizations and 10 ministries.

No one has a monopoly on caring for their constituents. Since being in this House, I have always been so impressed with how all members from all parties care for their constituents. Joignez-vous à moi aujourd'hui et faites preuve de leadership en soutenant l'appel des Organisations nationales autochtones. Join me today and show leadership by supporting the National Aboriginal Organizations' call to our federal government for a meaningful and inclusive national public inquiry that seeks the counsel of aboriginal peoples and examines the underlying causes that increase aboriginal women's vulnerability to violence. It is plain and simply the right thing to do.

Meegwetch. Merci beaucoup. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to rise today to this motion and provide a few comments.

First of all, we want to convey our understanding of the enormity of the problem. It's something that is certainly a dark mark on our society as a whole. I want to make sure that that is conveyed. But I also want to talk about looking beyond the request today, because I have some concerns.

One of them is the fact that there have been, I believe, 40 studies done in the last couple of decades and over 500 recommendations. My concern is that while this will bring greater attention to the issue, it worries me that we have 500 recommendations that are sitting and obviously not doing what they should be doing.

I also want to pay particular attention to the resolution where it talks about underlying causes and the severity of the issue. I have to tell you, on the severity of the issue, that there has been a discovery made immediately outside my riding, where there has been a suspicion that children were murdered. They have found, through radar ability, anomalies below ground. This is real. This is happening. This goes back several decades to a murder case, but it also demonstrates the problem that trying to find who the people were—they were quite young—so even the issue around "missing" is one that creates tremendous problems.

But I do think that we also have an obligation in this chamber to look at what the province has done, because the province has looked at those underlying causes and



the severity of the issue, I believe. If we look at the auditor's report in 2012, there's an entire section that has been done, particularly focused, on education. We all know that education is the key that opens the door to personal self-esteem, to economic opportunity. That's where so much effort has to go. But when you look at the document, there is some caution here as well, because it seems that there is a gap. With all the work that has been done, we still have some huge gaps to fill in order to be able to provide people with it.

So I would like to see today's discussion also include a commitment by the government to make sure that when the next auditor's report comes out, there is a demonstration of that gap being closed, there is a demonstration of being able to provide a better education system in the province, because I don't think there is a better testament that we could leave to the memory of those people than being able to demonstrate that this is what we have done in response, in our own province, with our own rules.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** As the NDP critic for both aboriginal affairs and women's issues, I'm glad we're speaking about the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women here today. Despite the fact that this issue is sombre, it is so very important to face this problem head on and move towards positive solutions.

I'll start by outlining some key facts. The RCMP reports that there are approximately 1,200 reported cases of murdered and missing aboriginal women over the past 30 years in this country. The RCMP study further indicates that aboriginal women are overrepresented among Canada's murdered and missing women, and that the rate of violence against aboriginal females is close to three times higher than that of non-aboriginal females.

It's important to keep in mind, when considering this issue, the fact that aboriginal communities are very diverse. Much like the rest of Canada, aboriginal communities vary from one community to the next. In my riding of Kenora-Rainy River alone, we have 49 First Nation communities and a number of different languages among them.

The aboriginal leaders I've spoken with recognize this issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women as one that will require the co-operation of all aboriginal people together with government leaders and police departments, including First Nation police forces, to properly address this issue.

We know the RCMP has already compiled very good information, and for years before that aboriginal organizations meticulously compiled this information. There's no disputing that these crimes are happening and we are pleased that the RCMP solves many of these cases. However, for the sake of reducing these numbers, simply looking at the crimes after the fact doesn't solve the problem of the issue happening in the first place, and that is: a high level of violence against aboriginal women and girls resulting in them turning up either murdered or missing.

**1540**

The most recent occurrence of a murdered aboriginal woman to hit the media is the horrific death of Tina Fontaine, a 15-year-old girl who was found in the Red River in Winnipeg in August. An awareness campaign has surfaced online called "Am I Next?" to bring attention to the mounting number of aboriginal women either killed or who have disappeared.

Why is this happening? What can we do as a province for our aboriginal women in Ontario? These are the questions that need answers. The situation is not solving itself, and these answers can save lives. I'm glad that after years of agitating about something needing to happen, finally there is an emerging consensus that at least there is a problem.

There are all sorts of ideas out there about why we are dealing with this issue in Ontario. Some people claim that it's a systemic problem. Some say it's a societal or sociological problem. Some say it's purely a crime and police issue. Some claim the problem stems from the disconnect and cultural losses resulting from residential schools. Some have written that it's about valuing people, and that society and communities simply don't properly value these aboriginal women, firstly, to respect them and, secondly, to help them. Some say there is a problem of chronically underfunded women's shelters and crisis shelters across this province. Some say it has to do with these women being "at risk." Some speculate it has to do with poverty, homelessness, poor health or lack of access.

The result is that aboriginal women are too often the victim because perpetrators believe they are easy targets and that no one will come looking for them. As legislators, as people of this province, as police departments, as media and as people of all communities, including aboriginal communities, we all play a part in sending the message that someone is looking for them; that these women are valued, as all women and people should be valued; that they must be respected; that they must be free to live their lives, free to exercise their rights, free to be physically safe from harm, as the law states; and that all violence will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Our role in this province is to look out for all of our people. Let's be sure that we are taking action towards seeing a great reduction in these numbers of murdered and missing aboriginal women in Ontario. Let's get to the bottom of this and turn this around.

The Ontario and federal NDP believe that a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women needs to happen so that we can examine the full scope of this issue as only an inquiry can.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I rise today in the Legislature to support the motion put forward so eloquently by the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to violence against aboriginal women and girls in Canada, it's time for a

change. The fact is, the rate of violence against aboriginal women in our country is alarming. It's a daily occurrence. Too many First Nations women have died, are dying or will die because of this disturbing problem. The question is, how many aboriginal women will have to die before the federal government decides to do something?

The motion put forward by the member from Kingston and the Islands demanding that the federal government hold a national public inquiry into the missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls is the right thing to do.

The numbers are staggering. The RCMP reports police recorded incidents of aboriginal female homicides and unresolved missing aboriginal women totalling 1,181 as of November 2013. In addition, aboriginal women are 2.5 times more likely to experience spousal abuse than non-aboriginal women, according to Stats Canada, and between 2001 and 2011, at least 8% of all murdered women aged 15 years old and older were aboriginal—double those in the regular Canadian population.

Think about it. What these numbers mean is that First Nations women in our country fear for their lives on a daily basis. More must be done to understand what is happening to these women. More must be done to give a voice to those who no longer have their own. More must be done to address this tragedy. It is unacceptable that so many aboriginal women—mothers, daughters, nieces, aunts—have to live their lives in fear.

The Ontario government recognizes that this is a serious and pervasive issue that touches not just the victims of violence, but their friends, neighbours and family. We, as a just society, need to do everything in our power to protect our most vulnerable citizens, and we are committed to working with provincial, territorial, federal and aboriginal partners to address and put an end to the unacceptably high rates of violence against First Nations women and girls.

In 2010, the provincial government, as you heard earlier, established the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that a long-term prevention strategy is in place to help reduce violence against aboriginal women and girls and their families.

We understand that there is more work to do and we will continue working until a just, equitable and safe standard is set. This government believes these are the sorts of steps that must be taken in order to deal with this pressing and disturbing issue. We must not shy away from our responsibility to provide security, opportunity and justice for all Ontarians, and that's especially true for our most vulnerable citizens.

That's why I'm lending my support to this motion. Ontario must continue supporting the national aboriginal association's call for the federal government to hold a national public inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. We need a concerted response that is comprehensive, coordinated, well resourced and developed in close collaboration with aboriginal communities. Only then can we begin to repair the damage

that has tragically affected so many women and children throughout Canada.

So I'm happy to lend my support to the member from Kingston and the Islands, and I ask that this Legislature do the same. This is not just a problem for aboriginal communities. This is a problem for all communities and all Canadians. We have to put a stop to the senseless violence against aboriginal women.

I ask you today, are we ready to take care of our aboriginal women who are being brutalized, or turn a blind eye like our federal cousins?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion addressing the disturbing issues surrounding the disappearance of aboriginal women. As we've heard, the motion is calling for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and severity of the issue.

There is no doubt that the numbers and emerging stories we hear surrounding the occurrence of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada and in Ontario are startling and call out for action. That said, I think it's important to understand what has been done to answer that call, what is being done and what we can do to move forward.

I will say that it's always very easy to point to other levels of government, other jurisdictions, to call for action and demand accountability. But I do feel that when these issues are occurring in our own backyard, it's important, when we call for action, that we have a responsibility to understand fully the steps being taken as they impact issues here at home. And here at home, the issues cry out for action.

**1550**

I know we'll be hearing a lot about national statistics today, but just to give you some provincial perspective: According to the Native Women's Association of Canada, there are 70 cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women here in Ontario. It's very sad to say, but almost all—90%—of these women were mothers. Those numbers are startling and completely disproportionate when compared with the general population.

Clearly, timely steps must be taken to reverse this trend and root out the underlying issues behind the numbers that reflect the realities tearing apart our aboriginal families. That's why the RCMP launched a national operational overview on missing and murdered aboriginal women, whose findings were released in May. The RCMP's findings provide important data about how the perpetrators of these heinous crimes abuse their victims. The RCMP found that 62% of homicides of aboriginal women were committed by a family member who had previously abused the victim, and 44% of those who murdered aboriginal women had consumed intoxicants prior to committing the crime. Again, those numbers are disproportionately higher when compared with non-aboriginal females.



That said, it's important to point out that nearly nine out of every 10 homicides were solved by police. That solve rate is the same whether the victim was an aboriginal female or a non-aboriginal female.

The RCMP study is one of some 40 studies already completed dealing with missing and murdered aboriginal women and has led the Harper government to commit an additional \$25 million to continue efforts to directly address the issue.

Given the destructive impact to our aboriginal families and communities, the federal government has also committed more than \$8 million towards supporting a national DNA-based missing persons index and new funding in 2013 for the Family Violence Prevention Program.

Just last year, Ottawa passed historic legislation giving aboriginal women on First Nations reserves the same matrimonial rights as all Canadians, including access to emergency protection orders in violent situations.

Again, the RCMP report was one of at least 40 studies, and rather than just continuing to study the issue, I feel it is important to understand the need to take concrete action and the steps that are currently being undertaken by our federal counterparts. For too long, the voices of victims have too often been ignored. Truly, they can be ignored no longer.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** We have a moral obligation as Canadians, but especially as the elected voices of Ontarians, to do the right thing and speak up to help others, and sometimes to speak for others. We must speak up, especially for those who are unable to speak for themselves because they have been taken or harmed or lost to us. There must be a federal public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.

In Ottawa, New Democrats have led the fight for a national inquiry, and they have pushed to include the indispensable voices of indigenous and Métis women in the development of a national action plan to address violence against women. There is no acceptable excuse for ignoring the systemic barriers facing aboriginal communities. The federal government must not use the cost of an inquiry as their excuse for refusing to act. To even suggest that the cost of an inquiry could possibly compete with the cost to those communities is disgraceful.

This is not a new issue; this is not a new call for action. This is a just a new official layer of support from across the country standing alongside First Nations groups, communities and families. For over a decade, voices have been calling attention to this horrible issue. It is a troubling commentary that such a real and awful issue of violence and harm has taken so long to build momentum and gain national attention.

The RCMP's May 2014 report on missing and murdered aboriginal women presented that "Aboriginal women are overrepresented among Canada's missing and murdered women." Canadians deserve to be safe and

protected. When we find that a group is disproportionately at risk, it must be a priority to investigate thoroughly. The RCMP report was an informative and necessary piece of this puzzle.

Factors that challenge communities and put families at risk of harm must be addressed. Those factors, however, must be addressed along with the root causes of harm. An inquiry is needed to confirm suspicions or challenge misconceptions, disprove assumptions and provide data from which to draw reliable conclusions with respect to risk factors contributing to women's disappearances and harm. We need evidence to allow authorities to make direct links from risk factors to solutions.

There are systemic issues that do disproportionately affect aboriginal communities. Addressing those issues will undoubtedly improve the lives of families and communities. However, addressing those issues alone does not guarantee that women and girls will be safe. It is not fair to assume, when it comes to safety. Women deserve to know that they will be safe. Women also deserve to know why they would not be safe.

As I said, this is not a new issue. Federal New Democrats have been bringing this to the fore for over a decade. MP Libby Davies first brought the idea to Parliament in 2001, Jack Layton publicly supported it in 2009 and Thomas Mulcair reaffirmed NDP support when elected as leader in 2012. Most recently, the federal NDP forced an emergency debate on a national inquiry this past September, and is committed to an inquiry within the first 100 days of an NDP mandate after the 2015 election, should they become government.

Major groups, including the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Canadian Public Health Association, CUPE, OPSEU, NUPGE, teachers' federations and countless others from across the province and country have added their voices to the call for a national inquiry.

I stand in support as a Canadian, as a New Democrat and as a woman. I stand firmly in opposition to this epidemic of harm that is targeting indigenous women. I will use my voice because almost 1,200 women have lost their voices and can't. I stand in this Legislature adding my voice to the call for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal girls and women.

Thank you and meegwetch.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Women's issues.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** —and women's issues.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Speaker.

First, I want to acknowledge our wonderful member from Kingston and the Islands for bringing this very important motion to the House today, and I want to acknowledge all the special guests who are here to listen to the debate today. I particularly want to acknowledge Elder Lyla Kinoshameg and Dawn Harvard, president of the Ontario Native Women's Association, who were with me and many other people this week in Nova Scotia at

the National Aboriginal Women's Summit. Additionally, Dawn also acted as president of the Native Women's Association of Canada. So she had to play two roles, and she did a fantastic job at the conference. We're a little tired this morning, but we're all glad to be here for this motion.

As discussed, Speaker, of course the rate of violence against aboriginal women and girls is unacceptably high; I think we're all agreeing on that. That is why our Premier joined the Council of the Federation meeting in August of this year to urge the federal government to initiate a public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. Right now, though, the discussion is happening at the table of Premiers and provincial ministers, such as the conference I was just at, along with my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. It's happening at that level as opposed to at the Prime Minister's level.

When the current minister of status of women Canada was recently asked if she would listen to victims and families and agree to a national inquiry regarding missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, her parliamentary secretary simply ignored the question. In the same session, the minister was asked four separate times whether she would support a national action plan to end violence against women. Her parliamentary secretary sidestepped the question every single time it was asked. So my question is, where are the Ontario PCs on this? Given the comments I've heard so far, I think it's direct from PMO briefing today. That's all I'm hearing. All I can conclude is that they're fairly silent on this issue, and that's most unfortunate.

As I said, I was at the summit this week, and it was a fantastic summit. First Nation, Inuit and Métis women delegates from across Canada gathered today to discuss the themes of employment, equity and leadership for aboriginal women. Our working group in Ontario, which other members have referred to in the debate, had been directed to lead the development of a socio-economic action plan for aboriginal women and girls—sorry, there's a national one and a provincial working group. That is under way.

1600

The reality is that when I was there, with our wonderful colleagues who are here in the House with us today, I sensed a lot of agreement that this national inquiry should go ahead. That is the hope and expectation, that the federal government will step up to the plate. Having said that, there are many good initiatives, many commitments by Ontario and other provinces to respond to this issue of missing aboriginal girls, but we really need the federal government at the table. This week at the summit, I joined the delegates in the circle of hope, a ceremony to honour missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. I can't tell you, Speaker, how moving that was.

I'm so disappointed, again, to point out that the federal government sent no political representatives this week to the national aboriginal summit—no minister, no chief of staff, no one was there from the federal government.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** No, it's true.

All I can surmise is that it's another example of the federal government's lack of commitment to aboriginal communities in this country. So I ask my colleagues across the floor: Where do they stand and can they persuade their federal counterparts to move on this?

On the other hand, here in Ontario, our government is committed to working with provincial, territorial and federal aboriginal partners to address and end the unacceptably high rates of violence against aboriginal women and girls in Canada. We, along with most provinces and territories, continue to support the National Aboriginal Organizations' call for the federal government to hold a national public inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls; and to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and the severity of the issue.

As mentioned before, our budget invests \$2 million over two years to support our provincial joint working group on violence against aboriginal women. They're having a meeting next week, and I'm looking forward to joining them. They're looking at the priorities and the investments we need to make and to develop a long-term plan for ending violence against aboriginal women. This group, I want to highlight, includes five different aboriginal organizations and 10 different Ontario government ministries. I think that's fantastic. I believe it's the only jurisdiction in Ontario with this kind of formal collaborative process with provincial ministries and aboriginal organizations; although I think the other provinces will probably follow suit. I just sensed so much enthusiasm at the summit this week and I got a sense of the fabulous work that a number of provinces and territories are doing in this regard.

Again I would ask our PC colleagues: How will they answer for their federal counterparts? I think it's pretty silent. That's what I'm sort of reading at this point. There should be no more silence on this issue, Speaker, especially given what we've heard today; especially given that we know how serious an issue this is; especially given the recognition that we need to invest in our aboriginal communities and end violence against women.

Simply put, it's a national shame that the federal government is ignoring a call for a national public inquiry. As the minister responsible for women's issues in Ontario, I'm very pleased to support this motion today. It's very important. She's done a fabulous job. I look forward to the vote in a few minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Nepean—Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to rise to debate today. I want to congratulate the new member from Kingston and the Islands for bringing this issue forward. I know it's your first private member's business. You put a lot of thought into what you want to bring to the floor of the assembly, and it often sets the tone for your legislative career. You must be very passionate about this issue, and I want to congratulate you for bringing it here today.



There are a number of concerns that many Canadians share on behalf of the aboriginal community, particularly when we take our places here in the assembly. I want to welcome them here today for their fight for this recognition and I applaud them for their determination. I think that's the best part about being a Canadian: that we can take issues that matter to us and bring them to the floor of an assembly or to a federal House of Parliament. I welcome you here today to do that.

My understanding, Speaker, is that we've had close to 40 reports, if not 40 reports, on this issue, which speaks to how important it is to Canadians, to federal parliamentarians and to the people of this province, particularly our aboriginal community. I understand, as well, that there are close to 500 recommendations, which I think ought to start being implemented, because this is a crisis in our country. It is something that requires action, and I join my voice to all of those members here to demand that action be taken.

I have a couple of minutes to speak to this issue, but I wanted to raise another issue that I think should be debated on the floor of the assembly. It's something that I've worked on in my own community that I think is at a crisis level here in the province of Ontario. While I have the opportunity, I want to talk about aboriginal youth suicide.

The Speaker is very much aware of the tragedy that occurred in my community with the young man who, I think, highlighted for all of us the need to start talking about suicide prevention for all Canadians. In particular, I notice—in the province of Ontario and, perhaps, in the rest of Canada, as well—that aboriginal suicide is quite high. I was startled to read some statistics from the children's advocate: Between 1986 and 2011, there were 341 suicides involving children, youth and adults between the ages of 10 and 30 in the Sioux Lookout First Nations region of northern Ontario.

During the time we were working in the city of Ottawa on trying to create a suicide prevention plan, we looked to the north, because they were dealing with an epidemic far greater than what we were experiencing in southern Ontario, and I think that that is critical.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** This is about aboriginal women murdered.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I really would expect the member opposite, who happens to be the women's issues critic, to allow me my time to speak about an issue and a crisis that is very important to me. I think I speak to the folks at home who are very concerned about the suicides that are taking place in Canada's north, particularly among young children.

It is further believed that, for every suicide amongst that age range, there are eight other attempted suicides. This is a crisis level, Speaker. We have seen it in communities across the province, but it is worse in these communities. For example, the aboriginal community of Pikangikum has been referenced as potentially having the highest suicide rate worldwide.

That's significant because that is in our province. We should be able to do something about it. We have talked

about this issue in the province before, but we can do, in my opinion, better.

So again, I speak directly to the member from Kingston and the Islands as I congratulate her for bringing forward this bill. I support it, and I encourage her to continue her efforts.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Oh, my goodness, pots and kettles. All I can say is that we have a Liberal Party who was in government federally—let us remind you—from 1993 to 2006. A number of First Nations women, aboriginal women, went missing or were murdered during that period of time. Did they have an inquiry? No. Now they're calling for an inquiry, now that they're in opposition in Ottawa.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Excuse me.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I had a very nice evening up until this point.

**Interjection:** That's not part of our contract, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I think everybody was given a chance to speak. Many of us paid attention, and I would ask us to continue that behaviour.

I turn to the member from Parkdale-High Park to continue speaking, and I expect the rest of you to listen.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To continue, here in the city of Toronto—when I was women's critic, I spoke up time and time again for victims' services—the largest service that actually goes where women are being attacked, goes to victims and helps them, the only one of its kind. Guess what? During the stay of this Liberal government, in the last 11 years, the funding per victim has been cut—let me tell you—from \$286 per victim to \$31 per victim today. That is the state of victims' services for women who are being assaulted in this province of Ontario.

There we have the pot. Here we have the kettle. Here we have—of course, I'm not going to defend; farthest from it—the Conservatives and their policies in Ottawa. I'm not going to defend them either. All I'm going to say is, for those who are listening, to those at home who are watching this: Look at your history. Look at your facts. Don't buy what either of these parties are selling you. For the first time, maybe stand up for yourselves—women, particularly. We cannot buy into the cynicism of political partisan rhetoric, which is what we're hearing today. We actually finally have to stand up for ourselves and say, "I don't buy them; I don't buy them. I'm going to stand with the victim. I'm going to stand with First Nations women." I think that's all women. We're going to demand justice no matter who's in power in Ottawa.

1610

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

There being none, I now turn to the member for Kingston and the Islands. You have two minutes for a reply.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to acknowledge the members from the opposition: MPP Munro from York-Simcoe, MPP Harris, and many thanks to MPP MacLeod from Nepean-Carleton. From the third party, I would like to acknowledge and thank: MPP Campbell from Kenora-Rainy River, MPP French from Oshawa and MPP DiNovo—thank you for your passion—from Parkdale-High Park. From the Liberal Party, I would like to acknowledge MPP Naidoo-Harris from Halton, Minister MacCharles, the minister responsible for women's issues and the Minister of Children and Youth Services, and that's that. I would like to thank all of my colleagues, seriously, for speaking to this issue.

An inquiry will provide support and a degree of closure to the families of victims and will facilitate healing and reconciliation. The Native Women's Association of Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Premiers of all provinces and the Assembly of First Nations all support the call by the National Aboriginal Organizations for a national inquiry into this issue. As dedicated community builders and policy-makers, it's our duty to add a voice of support to call on the federal government to begin a national public inquiry.

With me today, I carry a picture of Nicole, the aboriginal woman murdered in Winnipeg I spoke of earlier. Her mother shared a story with me: that after so many years, every time the phone rings, her first thought is that it may be the police letting her know that an arrest has been made. That one beautiful photograph of a life ended far too soon is only one among far too many.

Thank you. Please support this motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would just like to remind members, and I let it go because I didn't want to interrupt your two minutes, but we only refer to members in the Legislature by their riding, not by names. It's just a gentle reminder.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### HIGHWAY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA GESTION DES INCIDENTS DE LA ROUTE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 4, standing in the name of Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Martow moved second reading of Bill 30, An Act to require the establishment of an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for the improvement of highway incident management.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I defer to the member from Thornhill. Pursuant to standing orders, the bill may be referred to a standing committee.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** General government, if it pleases the Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member requested that the bill be referred to general government. Does the House agree? Agreed.

#### RYAN'S LAW (ENSURING ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS), 2014

#### LOI RYAN DE 2014 POUR ASSURER LA CRÉATION D'ÉCOLES ATTENTIVES À L'ASTHME

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Yurek has moved second reading of Bill 20, An Act to protect pupils with asthma.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** To the member.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** We'd like it to go to social policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to social policy. Agreed? Agreed.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Kiwala has moved private members' notice of motion number 6. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1615 to 1620.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Kiwala has moved private member's notice of motion number 6. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McDonell, Jim
Anderson, Granville	Forster, Cindy	McGarry, Kathryn
Armstrong, Teresa J.	French, Jennifer K.	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Miller, Paul
Baker, Yvan	Hoskins, Eric	Munro, Julia
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Campbell, Sarah	Kwinter, Monte	Qadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Damerla, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Delaney, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Dhillon, Vic	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter



Dickson, Joe  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dong, Han  
Duguid, Brad  
Dunlop, Garfield

Maihi, Harinder  
Mangat, Amrit  
Martins, Cristina  
Martow, Gila  
Matthews, Deborah

Taylor, Monique  
Vanthof, John  
Vernile, Dalene  
Wong, Soo

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 50; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 21, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / *Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I rise today to speak to Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour.

Before I begin an examination of the bill itself, I'd like to just comment on the fact that this bill is really two in one. In the previous legislative session, there were two very separate bills, one that addressed the minimum wage issue, Bill 165, and another that addressed issues related to employment and labour, Bill 146.

Bill 18 combines these bills, which I'm not sure I'm comfortable with, as these are two distinct issues. I think it's important to understand that in a productive debate, you want a bill that addresses a specific issue rather than several. One of the reasons is that it cuts the time in half, as we should be giving equal consideration to both parts of the bill.

My colleague from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has suggested an amendment to separate these two issues into separate bills so that we can focus our debates as opposed to having an omnibus bill that we are unable to give proper consideration. That being said, I will deal with both parts of the bill today in my remarks.

The first issue, then, is the question of minimum wage. The minimum wage was raised without any kind of rational basis this past June. The bill, then, sets out a predictable timetable for businesses for increasing the minimum wage. Originally, when the government consulted particularly with small business, the request was

with regard to predictability with the idea of every two years, not every one. The predictability, then, was to be based on this review that would be tied to inflation.

I think all of us can understand why a two-year span is preferable to one. Obviously, an annual increase causes the overall rate to increase at a faster pace than two years. The other is that the average of two years' inflation is likely to be a smaller amount. Annual increases, particularly in small businesses, become just that much more non-billable time, quite frankly, with the extra paperwork that goes with them. The effect of providing this to businesses, while it gave them the certainty of being tied to the CPI—the consumer price index—at the same time it is an annual thing. That is certainly a different kind of pressure for businesses. It will mean that the cost of doing business will increase at a faster rate, and that businesses will have less time to smooth out the financial adjustments that are required to be able to meet the changes.

Minimum wage is a very controversial issue because, as with so many things, it depends on whose shoes you're in. The danger is that an employer is faced with problems with regard to being able to afford this. Very often, people find themselves in the position that they either have to reduce hours or reduce jobs to meet this new hurdle. So it defeats the purpose of providing an opportunity for people, when in fact they may lose employment as opposed to having an increase.

1630

When we look at the population that we're looking at for minimum wage, there are different categories. The largest category is actually young people who go home. They are providing a service. They are getting the experience of their first job. They are gaining important work experience. Quite frankly, that's more important at this point than what their pay is.

Employers recognize that. I talked to an individual in my riding who has been a great source of employment for young people and has always made a place for them. But when the increases of minimum wage come along, he has to get out and sharpen his pencil, and I'll tell you why. He can hire, say, three students. It's their first job. They're going to require greater training and greater supervision, but it's good experience, and in a couple of years they'll be really good employees. But he's got a choice. If the minimum wage, just for example, is \$10 and he has three students for approximately \$30, he can have two adults for \$14 or \$15 who require no commensurate supervision, who take their job seriously, who get it done, who are more reliable, who don't come late, who don't forget their shift and things like that. For employers, there comes a point of really making a judgment call as to whether or not it serves their particular business to have those three young people or not.

So we have that group; and then a smaller but significant group are new immigrants, and they, of course, are looking for entry-level jobs. It may be to enhance their facility in English. It may be to get references and so

forth. Those two groups are people who are looking at entry-level jobs that have minimum wage.

The question of raising minimum wage is also something that is viewed by other sectors in the workforce; that is, the people who have contracts that set their wages at a certain percentage above minimum wage. It makes wage negotiations a really easy thing to do, because if you always have, let's say, 4% above minimum wage or 6%, or something like that, now you have a very strong bargaining position to be able to go in and say, "I need more money." Again, we come back to the business having to make that decision in terms of what they can afford and how many people they can afford. Those are very serious issues in the workplace.

It also means, obviously, that we have to deal with the fact that minimum wage jobs should be entry-level jobs, and that's really what the purpose is. It's to provide a baseline income for people entering the workforce. It is important to protect workers' rights and ensure that employees, especially those who have no prior work experience, are not being taken advantage of by employers. Jobs that offer minimum wage are meant, as I said, to be a starting-off point.

In some cases in Ontario, the minimum wage has become a career-long wage, and this is more common in Ontario than in any other province. I think it's important to note that. This should obviously not be the case and it speaks to the broader issue of just how high the minimum wage is or should be. Ontario is the only province since 2003 that has tripled the percentage of those in the workforce in minimum wage positions. That's very significant, that it's tripled the percentage. It now stands at almost 10% of our workforce making minimum wage, or over 500,000 people. Half a million people are making minimum wage, hundreds of thousands more people than when the Liberals came into office.

This brings me to another point. Here on this side of the House, we have been asking the government what they are doing to promote the increase of good jobs in this province. Just yesterday, the Premier said in the House during question period, "I actually believe that fiscal prudence and a strong economy are connected." Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we have our answer here. Fiscal prudence? What fiscal prudence? No wonder we have such a weak economy and a shortage of good jobs, because the Liberal government, for over a decade, has dug us into a deeper economic hole than we've ever seen.

I think it's important to put this conversation about Bill 18 into that broader context of the economy, so I'm going to provide you with some statistics that I think are definitely earmarks for what we're looking at.

In 2009, the deficit was \$19.3 billion, and unemployment in this province was at 9%. The national rate of unemployment was 8.3%.

Now, there isn't a test at the end, so you don't have to remember these, but I do think it's important to see the trend when you look over the last few years.

If we jump to 2011, the deficit was \$13 billion and unemployment had dropped to 7.8%, but the national unemployment rate was 7.4%.

In 2012, the deficit was \$9.2 billion, the unemployment rate remained at 7.8% and the national unemployment rate was 7.2%.

In 2013, the deficit had gone back up to \$10.5 billion. Unemployment went to 7.5%. The national unemployment rate was 7.1%, the lowest of the period of time.

In 2014, we have a deficit of at least \$12.5 billion. We are not quite sure, because there are anticipated asset sales; we just don't know how many times they've been counted.

Not only has Ontario's economy been suffering because of this government's policies, but the government continues to make it difficult for businesses to run in this province, due to red tape and payroll taxes. I think that probably if I were to ask any of the small businesses in my riding, they would talk about red tape.

My favourite story is one where ministries can't agree on the rules. I have two businesses. One has a door, and one ministry says it swings this way; the other ministry says it swings the other way. I have another constituent trying to make a living who has the Ministry of Health, two different departments, and they can't agree on the level of chlorine that is appropriate.

Everywhere you go, you get that constant refrain: "Let us do our job. We can actually make money if you leave us alone, and we can move along, ahead with our business." They're not saying that because they cut corners on health or safety or anything like that. It's because it's a new set of rules at a pace that makes it very difficult for them to make any money and therefore pay taxes. People forget: Businesses have to make a profit. That's the only way that government survives.

1640

The other issue, of course, is the question of the tax burden. This minimum wage, of course, comes out of the pocket of the business, and so it is, in fact, the same thing as a payroll tax. The credit rating agencies like Moody's and Standard and Poor's know this—that the province of Ontario is going to have to eliminate the budget deficit. After several warnings, the agencies seem ready to downgrade Ontario. If Ontario's rating goes down, the deficit will grow even faster, because our borrowing costs will increase by at least one percentage point, which amounts to at least a \$500-million-a-year increase to the deficit. A higher government deficit equals a more fragile economy.

Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years, I have spoken with hundreds of small business owners and their representatives from affiliated associations, and I've heard the same types of stories over and over again. Most businesses, especially small businesses, have had to face dozens of regulations by a number of agencies, boards and commissions, which all have different rules and standards which sometimes conflict with each other. It takes hours and hours for businesses to deal with the agencies, boards and commissions, and the numerous job-killing regulations that they face.

In 2012, the Ontario Home Builders' Association, as an example, said there were 28 agencies, boards and



commissions that home builders have to deal with. That's a bit like having 28 bosses. Which one takes precedence over which? Think about the time it would take to deal with all of these, let alone deal with day-to-day business operations. Just dealing with regulations comes to be a full-time job.

Not only are businesses hit with red tape, they also have to worry about payroll taxes. The most recent tax that businesses have to figure out is the government's proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, which will add even more expenses in the future and reduce their bottom line; and jobs will surely be lost. This isn't my opinion; this is the sentiment of Ontario's small businesses and associations, including hundreds of local chambers across the province that have created a coalition to deal with this new proposed pension plan, the details of which we are eagerly awaiting.

Mr. Speaker, in order to have more jobs, we need a better economy. In order to have a better economy, we must make Ontario a good place to do business.

Yesterday, the Minister of Economic Development bragged about how well small businesses are doing in Ontario. Well, I'm not sure I can agree with him on this point. If Ontario's environment is so conducive to economic success and job creation, why have we had a higher unemployment rate than the rest of Canada for the last five years? And why do I hear from businesses and industries, almost on a daily basis, about how hard it is to do business in Ontario? These are hardly the comments you hear from people who are comfortable with government policies.

I know the Liberals like to pride themselves on their accomplishments, but the reality is that we live in a province where too many people rely on minimum wage. Minimum wage is meant to be a temporary measure, not a permanent, career-long wage. It is also a costly measure that promotes the hiring of fewer people.

The important thing here, as we look at this bill, is to look beyond the bill: What are the implications, and how does it benefit the people of Ontario? Keeping in mind that we have large segments of business that have left—Caterpillar, Heinz, Stelco—these are names that have always made a huge contribution to the employment in this province. We have to make sure that we can continue the tradition of excellence and move forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm happy to stand after the member for Dufferin—Caledon to make comments on the comments she made. She referenced the minimum wage and how the Conservative Party doesn't believe that we need an increase, that the minimum wage is something that is a minimum for a reason, and that companies and businesses should be able to pay more than the minimum. Unfortunately, we don't see that happening.

So we knew, as New Democrats, when it came to making recommendations for the budget around the minimum wage, that it was important to bring the minimum wage to \$12 an hour, not just \$11 an hour. We

knew that companies and small businesses would have difficulty with that. That's why we implemented tax credits to make sure we had a balance in our system, so that, yes, businesses could still afford to pay that wage and people had more money to spend back into those businesses to give us a stronger economy. That's one part of this bill that we were talking about—the minimum wage.

Something else I'd like to talk about is the temporary agencies. We know that our workforce working in temporary agencies are only making 40% of the actual wage that that job is producing. So the person who's working next to them is making 60% more doing the exact same job. I have a real problem with that, Speaker. Yes, there are supposed to be temp agencies, but we find that the temp agencies use people on a regular basis to fill those positions of temp agencies. I'm sure that across this province and across this floor, we've all heard the same stories from people who just can't get by, that the temp agencies are taking up 18% of our workforce, and it's something that we need to work on further.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to join the debate today and thank the member from York—Simcoe for her comments. Certainly when you get more than 100 politicians in a room, you're going to get a variety of comments, and I appreciate the comments that were made by the member. They're not comments I necessarily agree with, but I think she did her homework.

What this bill is really about—there's a number of things in here, but I think it's really about standing up for the people who do the work here in the province of Ontario. It means we're going to strengthen workplace protections for workers. It means we're also going to increase the fairness level for businesses that already play by the rules. Those businesses that do the right thing will now be able to compete on a more even playing field, and I think that's good for everybody. What it does is, it takes very important steps to ensure something that's very fundamental: that every Ontarian who works ends up with a paycheque they've earned. That doesn't seem to me to be very unreasonable.

It also proposes to protect the most vulnerable workers in our workforce from dangerous work situations. It builds on a lot of recommendations that came forward in this regard. We heard from the Law Commission of Ontario. We got advice from the United Way. We heard from poverty groups. We heard from a number of individuals who said that this was a good way to move forward. It shows, out of those positive conversations that we had, that we can move ahead in a meaningful way that's going to make a difference to people in the province of Ontario who really need our help.

It does some very practical things, too. It removes the \$10,000 cap. It allows workers more time to recover wages if they feel they've been treated unfairly by their employer. But what I think is really important is, we decided that in order to try and take the politics out of the

minimum wage, we would tie it to the CPI, which would mean it would move ahead in a predictable way for business. By passing this legislation, we allow that to happen.

I would ask the entire House to support Bill 18.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm pleased to comment on the member from—oh, my gosh, I forget—York—

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Simcoe.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I was going to say York North; York—Simcoe.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I know. The Speaker struggles, so do we sometimes. The ridings change—and still to come.

Today, we're talking about Bill 18, Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014, introduced by the Minister of Labour. Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Labour. It's the first time I've had an opportunity to say that to you in House.

We certainly have different opinions. As he says, when you get many members of a provincial Legislature in a room, politicians on this side do have different points of view. We have strong concerns and the member from York—Simcoe expressed them. We didn't disagree with the minimum wage increase when it was before Parliament before the election. We didn't disagree with that.

1650

There is a principle that you have to keep in mind here, though, and that's the balances of small businesses. Now, I know the minister mentioned that you want to stay competitive. It's pretty hard to stay competitive when the energy rates have more than tripled since the Liberal government has been in. That's been a huge burden that is not being dealt with. We are told by the present energy minister that the rates are still going to increase. That's a burden on small business. That's a non-competitive feature we have, and all our businesses struggle every day.

We also have to be careful: We don't want lots of people on minimum wage. Minimum wage jobs were for the introduction, for students, as the member has said. We want less minimum wage jobs and we want more well-paying jobs. That has not happened under this government.

Also, we've seen the number on minimum wage increase by hundreds of thousands. Our economy is poor. I have more people in poverty now than I had before the Liberal government took power. That's a sign. I don't make those things up; that's the reality. You see it in the statistics. So you have to be very careful when you bring in bills that say "Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy" when we don't think they're actually going to achieve that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you to the member from York—Simcoe for her comments on this bill. It's an important issue. I don't know that the bill in itself is that

important, because it really only makes very modest changes to a number of pieces of legislation, number one being the extended damages provision. In that particular situation, the six-month cap is removed and extended to two years, which is a good thing, and the \$10,000 cap is also removed. This will allow workers to, in fact, collect some back wages.

The problem is that there still are enforcement issues through the Employment Standards Act. I've talked about them many times in this Legislature: the thousands of people who never collect their overtime pay, their holiday pay, their vacation pay, sometimes even their straight hourly pay. We've seen big cuts to enforcement in employment standards over the past couple of years. We've seen a blitz that the minister, I think, reported on during some of this debate, where 57 employers had spot checks done and the results were really abysmal, with 42% of them having violations of the Employment Standards Act.

While the bill is attempting to make some little steps to improve some things, there are much larger issues, such as severance pay issues, here in this province, with businesses going under and employees being unable to actually collect it; the low cap that's actually on severance pay provincially; and the ability for people to collect under WEPP federally as well when businesses claim bankruptcy in the US instead of in Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member for York—Simcoe. You have two minutes for a response.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you very much. I particularly want to thank the Minister of Labour, the member for Hamilton Mountain, the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock and the member for Welland.

I appreciate the comments. I would just remind the minister that we did support the minimum wage, and much of the business of this bill is, again, something that our critic indicated some support for. But I think that, for the purposes of our discussion, one of the things that continues to haunt like a spectre, with regard to minimum wage in this province, is in terms of the number of people. I think it's quite frightening to think that we have three times the number of people on minimum wage in this province than in the rest of the country. Certainly, when you look at the national unemployment rate and the Ontario unemployment rate, those are, again, very unsettling numbers.

I think the challenge, then, is to be looking at how we go forward where there is an opportunity, where the kinds of profits that translate into employees and more business are exactly what this province needs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The Associate Minister of Health.

Just one second. Before I recognize you, I have something to announce.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and one-half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will



therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

The Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** No further debate, Mr. Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 22, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** When this item of business was last debated, the member for Simcoe North had 44 minutes and 24 seconds remaining. The member for Simcoe North.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be sharing some time this afternoon when Ms. MacLeod comes back to finish off the 44 minutes. Okay?

First of all, I'm kind of disappointed. I sat the other day—Mr. Speaker, I wanted you to hear this. I sat the other day through probably the most painful speech in my life, listening to Minister Sandals and the parliamentary assistant deliver their leadoff, and they are not even here today to hear my speech. Like, come on. This is unbelievable. Do they not care any more about this bill—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Mississauga—Streetsville on a point of order.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, my esteemed colleague from Simcoe North knows that in the course of debate it is not parliamentary to refer to either the presence or the absence of a member. In fact, he referred to both the presence or non-presence of a minister and an assistant. I would ask the Speaker to enforce our accepted decorum.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I recognize the member's point of order. He's accurate, and I'll ask the member to please keep to the debate.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My apologies. I forgot all about that. I'm so sorry. I can't refer to the fact that the minister is not here? Oh, I'm sorry; my apologies. But I listened to her the other day. Talk about painful.

Anyhow, I wanted to pick up on a few areas here. The other day when we spoke, yesterday morning, was prior to the announcement of the Ombudsman on his report, and the report ended up being called—I hope this is not a prop; I know it's probably illegal. But it's called *Careless* about Child Care. Now I know why they wanted to jump out in front of the legislation, of Bill 10, because they knew this report was basically a condemnation of everything this government has done with education, with respect to child care, in the last 12 years. So they have had 12 years to fix the daycare system in the province of Ontario, and really and truly, they've done very little; in fact, it's basically a very, very negative position against the Ministry of Education.

So then all of a sudden in the debate we had the Minister of Education and the parliamentary assistant, and they both—he's not here either.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** This will be my last warning to you. You know the rules; you've been here a very long time.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I know. Sorry. I forgot again.

1700

But the fact of the matter was that they kept referring to the speedy passage of Bill 10: "We have to get this done quickly." They said that, of course, for the media, and they said it because they knew that that afternoon the Ombudsman report would come out, condemning the government. Then they turned around after the Ombudsman report came out. We've seen messages from the minister: They're working on so many recommendations. They've already implemented this; they've implemented that. Everything is wonderful. "Let's get this bill passed through the House."

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to be the critic for education and I've been working extremely hard in this portfolio, meeting with stakeholders from right across our province. I've met with a lot of stakeholders who absolutely detest this piece of legislation—absolutely detest it. It's a job killer and it does nothing for the public safety of the people we treasure the most: our children. That's the problem we have.

I'm going to do some reading here on some of the things that I wanted to point out in the Ombudsman's report. I want to make sure we're clear that the Ombudsman really didn't agree that the bill should pass in these next few weeks. He wants all these things implemented, of course, as quickly as possible.

I'll read a couple of things here. In his executive summary, section 12:

"As well, the ministry neglected to engage parents in the enforcement process, and tended to avoid them altogether." Imagine, these are the parents of the 350,000 kids that are impacted. They weren't engaged. "The ministry has not undertaken sufficient steps to educate

parents, caregivers or the public about the requirements of the Day Nurseries Act and the important health, safety and child welfare purposes underlying the legislation.” That was by André Marin, the Ombudsman of Ontario.

The next point he makes:

“The Ministry of Education is just one in a line of ministries to have had responsibility for administering the Day Nurseries Act. Since taking on this role, it has initiated improvements to its operational practices and policies, including development of a dedicated enforcement unit to respond to complaints about unlicensed daycare operators. However, the ministry’s efforts are too little, too late. In my opinion, its delayed, inconsistent and incomplete response to complaints and concerns relating to unlicensed child care providers is unreasonable and wrong under the Ombudsman Act.”

That’s just a few; I could go on. Just look how thick this book is on recommendations and concerns that the Ombudsman has had with the work of the Ministry of Education up to now.

What the Ministry of Education wants to do—here we did it, first of all, yesterday morning; they split our leadoff time. We’re at the end of the week now and I’m assuming they’re trying to speed this up.

What we’re asking, one of our key messages from our party and what we’re saying to our stakeholders across the province, is: Because it has taken 12 years to get to this stage—because we’ve had 12 years of this painful government—surely to God we can wait seven weeks and do the consultations across the province during the winter recess. Remember, we are back here the day after Family Day. I have letters here from people right across the province—from Lively, from Thunder Bay, from Newmarket, from Windsor, from Ottawa—right across the province. These are private daycare operators who are very, very disturbed about this legislation, and they want an opportunity to attend committee hearings on this particular issue.

I’m asking the minister, and I’m asking the parliamentary assistant and the Ministry of Education and particularly the Premier’s office, who controls it all, that we do want those things. We want those committee hearings in the winter months.

Second of all, we’ll start a petition right away. We’ll be reading that petition in the House here, and that petition will call for province-wide consultations and input on the committee hearings, which would be scheduled for some time, I hope, in the winter.

Why I bring that up is because there has been some consultation done on the bill up to this date, and I want to tell you the percentage of people; the minister brought this up as well. I believe it was a total of—anyhow, 69% of the participants in the community sessions were from child care agencies and 31% were parents. Nobody was notified from the private daycare operators of the province—nobody. Like I said, there are 300,000 children they look after. They were not consulted on this. So we can’t say for one second that there was a thorough consultation done on this particular bill.

As our party moves forward, we certainly want to make sure that our daycare providers are given a fair and ample opportunity to make good comments and positive comments, and of course our party wants to make a number of amendments to this particular bill when the opportunity comes up.

I want to carry on now, Mr. Speaker—I want to leave some time for Ms. MacLeod here—with the next stage. I’ve got so many speeches here, it’s not funny. Oh, here we go.

Okay. I left off the other day, and I only got 15 minutes in the other day. To briefly recap, should Bill 10 pass with this proposal to amend the number and age ratios of children that ICPs can care for, we can expect the following: Ontario families will lose access to approximately 140,000 daycare spots. Based on population data from StatsCan, the number of children under 24 months that require the care of ICPs in Ontario is approximately 212,500, and that’s using a conservative estimate of 50%. Adding providers’ own children into the equation results in an additional loss of approximately 63,000 spaces.

In addition, the introduction of full-day kindergarten and senior kindergarten leaves 70,000 ICPs to care for approximately 100,000 children between the ages of 24 and 42 to 48 months. That averages to 1.5 children per provider. At an average of three children or fewer in care, many providers will be forced to shut their doors, as their businesses will no longer be financially viable. This will, of course, lead to an even greater shortage of care.

This scenario doesn’t apply only to ICPs. The truth is that since the implementation of full-day kindergarten, even agencies are feeling the pinch. Fewer and fewer agency providers are able to fill their spaces due to the combination of the two-under-two restriction, inclusion of their own children and full-day kindergarten. Many are leaving agencies and becoming ICPs as a result of that. Parents will face a hike of 30% to 40% in daycare fees to make up the shortfall of income to providers.

There will be no improved oversight. Providers will lose an average of between \$12,000 to \$20,000 of family income per year due to the involuntary reduction of spaces, or by being coerced to work for a licensed agency. Providers who are required to shut their doors because their businesses are no longer financially viable will be facing an unemployment rate of 7.1%. Parents who are already struggling financially may choose to give up work, as the increase in daycare fees will negate their take-home pay. The majority of those who will be forced to reconsider working outside the home as a result of this bill, of course, will be women.

In short, rather than making child care in Ontario safe, affordable and accessible, Bill 10 will make child care in Ontario far less safe and accessible, and certainly more expensive. These ratio proposals are not only counterproductive to the health, safety and well-being of our children, but are also playing with the livelihoods of tens of thousands of families in this province.

If Bill 10 is intended to address this government’s stated concerns regarding the overall safety and lack of



oversight that exists for children in the care of ICPs, why does this government insist on addressing those concerns by reducing accessible and affordable child care by 140,000 spaces, rather than providing an individual licensing system that includes all home daycare providers? Instituting such a system would maintain the choices that parents demand, ensure that government-regulated health and safety standards are met, allow for inspections and eliminate the wait-list for subsidized care.

Why has the ministry tossed out the suggestion of a provincial registry or licensing on the opinion of a single consultant from an Ontario college who declared that it would be too expensive, or that it would “create a false sense of security for parents”? How does licensing individuals differ from licensing agencies?

The ministry also expressed concern about staff overload and caregivers going underground. Is this ministry interested in safety or budget? If there are concerns about providers going underground, we must absolutely question the bill’s proposed changes to the ratio and the number of children an ICP can care for. Given that this bill, if passed, will eliminate 140,000 daycare spaces in Ontario, there is no doubt that this bill will create an underground market. Not only will those underground daycares be impossible to oversee, social activities such as library, playgroup and park time will be eliminated, as the providers will not dare to take their children to public spaces.

1710

We urge this government to reconsider the proposed changes to the ratio and number of children that independent child care providers can care for, and that it provide a licensing system and a regulating system for all home daycare providers.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to actually give you some examples of some of the letters that have come into me. I have a pile of them here right now, and there’s probably five times as many more in my office. I’d also ask, if any of the government members or the third party members want to have an opportunity to read these letters or they want to maybe use them in some of their debate, fine. Of course, I’ll spread them to my own caucus members as well.

There are three or four that are just absolutely unbelievable to think that we’re going to rush through a bill like this. Here’s one example—and these have all come in just this week, since they found out the government was moving forward with Bill 10 and they want to—probably they’ll end up time-allocating the bloody thing.

“Bill 10 is of great concern to me a home daycare provider. The numbers are just incomprehensible! When parents are looking for care for their child it is highly probable that the child is under the age of two years. Maternity leave is for 12 months. If the numbers are passed as proposed there will be a crisis in daycare.

“The town I live in has two centres. The rest of care is provided by loving, smart home care providers like myself. We had 1,000-plus babies born in our community last year. Where does our government propose that these

children go? I can guarantee you that there are not that many infant spots in the two centres.

“To add my school-aged child into the numbers is also ridiculous! She is four. She is in school all day. Why should a school-aged child take away from my numbers?”

“Having two under two is also not possible. It is so much easier to plan a program for kids the same age. It is safer. I can make sure that my daycare space has appropriate toys with pieces not too small. Again, with so many babies in our town this ratio would mean I would have to shut down. I cannot run a business and pay my bills with only three paying kids in my care.

“This would mean my daycare families would be scrambling to find care in a town there is already a shortage of care. I would be scrambling to find a job and care for my kids.

“It is a horribly short-sighted bill that really needs to be thrown out.” The more I see the bill, I completely agree with this lady. “Reducing our numbers as responsible care providers is not the answer.

“Insist providers have their CPR/first aid. Insist they have a police check. But to reduce the numbers and put an age on them” is “not going to solve any problems. If someone is a bad provider, it is not going to matter if they have five kids or one kid.

“I am just one of many.”

That is signed. I’m not going to mention her name, but it’s a daycare provider.

I want to also point out a couple of others here. This is coming from Deb’s Home Childcare in—I’m not sure where the exact location is. But anyhow, Deb has written in her note here:

“As you are preparing for today’s opening speech ...

“I want to point out that 80% of families have chosen their independent child care provider not out of desperation or lack of available providers who work for an agency. They have chosen to place their children in our care after visiting several centres, agency homes or other independent provider homes and finding the best match for their parenting and child care needs. The 80% speaks volumes. Parents want choice and they want the best for their child. Agencies have struggled for years to maintain clients and employees and I believe they have billions of dollars to gain from further restricting our client base and opening up theirs. Instead of evening the playing field they are doing their best to make it to their advantage. Not for the safety of the children as they claim but to line their pockets. If the figures that are being reported are correct and they gained only 50% of the 823,000 children in ‘informal care arrangements’ they would see \$1,604,850,000 in revenue per year from these clients. And at the cost of over \$1 billion to business owners like myself. I arrive at the figure based on what parents in London, Ontario, pay: \$43 per day to place their child in an agency provider’s home and providers themselves are paid \$28 per day in compensation. Multiply that \$15 by five days a week equals \$75 per child/week. Times 52 weeks is \$3,900/year. Times a conservative 50% of the 823,500 children in unregulated care arrangements.

"It is obvious to me that someone is pushing this through for profit and not for the safety of our children. Adding additional spaces for agency providers and waiving the very safety rules they are implementing with the clause that they can further reduce these age restrictions in the future only tells me that they are looking at profit for their business and not safety.

"Ontario needs to look closer at other provinces' registration and licensing systems as working for an agency is not the answer for Ontario home child care providers, parents or the children who require care.

"Thank you again for speaking on our behalf." That's another one, Mr. Speaker.

I have one more, and then I want to make some summary comments before I turn it over to Ms. MacLeod.

"I am an independent daycare provider and a mother of three young children. I have concerns over the proposed daycare modernization act also known as Bill 10. Since September 2007 I have provided a safe, loving and educational daycare program to children between the ages of 10 months and 9 years old in Old Ottawa East and in Alta Vista. When I first started my daycare my own two older children were 6 months and 27 months. Two and a half years later I had my third child. The proposed changes would mean that I would have never been able to financially open up my doors as I would have been able to only look after two other daycare children. I contribute the huge amount of compassion and love that all three of my children have for little ones to them growing up in a daycare setting. I have always loved working with children; however, it was a close friend who approached me for daycare while I was on an unpaid maternity leave that ultimately started my daycare. From there a community of families and friends has grown as my daycare families have become more than that; they have become an extension of my family.

"There must be oversight in home daycare to ensure compliance and safety; however, the proposed changes are going to be drastic to child care accessibility in Ontario. Many home daycares like my own would lose spaces, many would have to close, others would never open in the first place. The Coalition of Independent Child Care Providers of Ontario is suggesting that as many as 140,000 spaces may be lost due to this bill, representing approximately 40% of the children currently in independent child care providers' care across the province.

"Bill 10 proposes that independent child care providers such as myself become affiliated with child care agencies which would be a significant portion of our take-home pay for no benefit. The agency promises to provide middleman services and places people in my care when in fact I attract all my clients through word of mouth and have no need for placement service. The estimated cost to my business run under an agency as proposed through Bill 10 is up to \$10 per child per day representing \$300 per week or a grand total of \$15,600 per year with the new proposal of six daycare children in my care. Under the proposed rules I would have to count

my four-year-old son who is only home for two hours at the end of the day. I would have to put him in someone else's care at the end of the day so that a full-day spot would not disappear.

"This is absurd! Let the independent daycare providers become licensed for a reasonable fee and have unscheduled inspections plus mandatory first aid/CPR training to improve upon the safety within daycares. The current DNA already has provisions for maximum numbers allowable in a home daycare which I have always abided by.

"At the end of the day I love my job! I hope to continue for many more years to come, providing I can financially afford to do so. Please make changes to this bill so that the ... excellent, loving home independent daycare providers can continue to be successful and daycare spots will not disappear in Ontario." That's signed by a lady from the city of Ottawa.

What I'm getting at here is, you can see that there is much opposition to this bill from people who have never been consulted on the bill. Now, what does that sound like? Do you remember something else in the last couple of years? The Ontario College of Trades—same thing. The tradesmen of Ontario were not consulted. The people who are behind the Working Families Coalition—that's who was consulted, not the tradespeople of Ontario. Now they're paying the price, and I can tell you, it's bothersome the minute I hear the Premier say, "Based on the success of our first year of the College of Trades, I will do a review of it." Talk about an oxymoron. Really, the College of Trades has been a disaster and you're going down the same road here with this bill.

I'm going to repeat again before I turn it over to—are you ready to go, Ms. MacLeod?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm ready whenever you are.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Okay. I see you talking.

What I'm getting at, Mr. Speaker, is, we are prepared to fight hard for the independent daycare providers in Ontario. At the end of the day, they have the government—some of them can be like trained seals and vote on everything, or some of them can stick up for the actual people that they represent in the province of Ontario.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, I've asked over and over again and will continue to ask in questions and will continue to ask in this debate is to have open and transparent committee hearings when it does go to committee in the winter recess. We will work diligently with you. We will do the very best to make sure we get the very best bill here.

**1720**

Remember, these are our children. They are the most prized possessions we have. Our children, our grandchildren—everyone here who has children or grandchildren knows how valuable they are to us. We don't want anybody not in good daycare if they require it. But we want the daycare to be fair, and transparent. We want all daycare providers to have a fair shot at doing their job and earning a living. We don't want to eliminate 140,000 daycare spaces. That's what this bill will do if we carry it through.



I don't expect the minister—in her answers to Ms. MacLeod in the last couple of days, I'm not even sure she knew what we were talking about. But I can tell you, we will continue this battle, and we will continue this battle on behalf of all those little babies and all those young men and women who have children who want to have proper daycare service in the province of Ontario.

Thank you very much. With that, I would like to turn it over to Ms. MacLeod.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Nepean—Carleton.

Before we carry on, I will just remind members again: We're not supposed to use names.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It is my pleasure to join in the debate today on Bill 10, something that is going to impact my fast-growing community of Nepean—Carleton but also communities across this wonderful province, in particular those who require child care.

You will see, in fast-growing areas and in rural communities, that Bill 10 will be absolutely catastrophic as we move toward, in the province of Ontario, affirming Bill 10, which will cause this province to lose 140,000 accessible and affordable daycare spaces.

At a time when we actually have a crisis in child care and it's very difficult for many people around the province not only to find suitable child care but affordable child care—I don't believe that this is the time for the government to be eliminating 140,000 spaces.

In fact, what I think is that the government should heed the caution from child care providers and daycare operators across the province, including those who operate Montessori schools, those who are part of Jewish day schools—my colleague from Thornhill is with me today; this is an issue that's come up when I visited her riding—as well as independent religious schools in southwestern Ontario. This is an issue that could actually put a number of licensed daycare operators out of business, according to the association of daycare operators.

Speaker, when I first was elected here nine years ago, I was the children and youth critic. We talked a lot about daycare at that point in time, about child care. I became an advocate. As you will recall, from the time I arrived here I had a small little baby. She is now nine years old. It coincides with my time in this assembly, ironically. I can tell you, speaking first-hand, the issues that I've had with child care myself. You will remember I was an advocate for making the Legislature more family-friendly. To those new members who have arrived in 2011 or 2014, this Legislature used to sit until midnight, and if not till then, till 9 o'clock at night. I had encouraged this assembly to be more family-friendly. So this is from the point of view of where I'm coming from.

There are several flaws with Bill 10, and that's why I urge caution with the government. In fact, if they're going to proceed with the bill, I suggest two things: One is that they adequately travel throughout this province in order to hear from parents and daycare operators as well as independent schools; and secondly, to be open to

amendments that will ensure that we do not lose daycare spaces or child care spaces in the province, which will only create further crisis in Ontario. That to me is something that is very important.

I think too, what concerns me, and I think we have to have a very honest conversation in this assembly about this: Is the Liberal government prepared to take away parental choice and parental responsibility? Because that's what I hear when I hear about this.

I met with, as I've said several times, many child care operators throughout the entire province, in particular in my city of Ottawa—whether it's the Coalition of Independent Child Care Providers, whether it is the Montessori schools or the association of daycare providers—with a great deal of concern here. In fact, it was just the association of daycare providers yesterday—licensed daycares, independent daycares—who actually urged caution on proceeding with Bill 10.

There is nothing wrong with trying to address problems, particularly when it becomes a safety concern, and I would urge the government to look at many of the Ombudsman's recommendations into making sure that there is more cohesion between and among different government agencies, between and among different government departments. It's very clear, according to the Ombudsman, that there was a lack of safeguards and utter failure in not only communication but investigation by the Liberal government in the Ministry of Education during a couple of instances. I would urge them to look at this and speak to all of the stakeholders in order to get this right.

From those I speak to, they are not opposed to greater oversight or a greater regulatory environment; in fact, I think you'll see that most professionals and most people who want to do well in their small business want to ensure that they are the best. What concerns me about this, in addition to losing 140,000 child care spaces, is the fact that we may end up seeing more underground operations that are not meeting even the basic regulations that the government has laid out. In addition to this, what concerns me is that some of the challenges that we have faced in the independent child care sector have largely been because the government or the ministry didn't follow through or follow up with complaints that were made by parents. That deeply concerns me.

At the present moment, the Ombudsman suggests that there are over 800,000 children in independent care, in unlicensed care, in the province of Ontario, and what I would suggest is for the government to embrace these child care providers, bring them into the process, make them feel like they are part of the solution rather than part of the problem, because many of those folks out there are working hard on behalf of many in the community—parents like myself, for example—who choose care close to home by people that they know and that they trust. There is, as I said, an element of parental responsibility and parental choice.

At the very early stages of the debate on full-day learning, which a lot of members in this assembly were

not present for because they had not been elected at the time, I was one of those voices. My daughter was actually among the first to go through full-day learning, and I had highlighted some of the challenges we would expect. Not unexpectedly, my daughter did have some challenges at that point in time in embracing a full day of learning at a very young age. Many parents and even some teachers have talked to me, and I had, Speaker, as you will recall, a great deal of experience as the education critic for the official opposition, so I would have spoken to many of the stakeholders during that period of time.

If the government is wanting to get into the baby-sitting business and they want to create a bureaucracy, I would strongly urge against that. I think we should encourage parental choice, parental responsibility and entrepreneurship, and I think that there is an opportunity for us to do that.

What worries me about Bill 10 is that it will prohibit the operation of a child care centre and a child care agency without a permit. It prohibits certain people from providing care, based on past conduct, and I think that's probably a fair assessment, and that's where there is some merit in some elements of this. But, above and beyond, I think it really will be very difficult for high-quality care to be embraced in Ontario, and it seems as if the government wants to move to an agency model which is run by them in the province of Ontario. Therefore, I think they must be honest in this debate about how they expect to replace the 140,000 child care spaces that will be lost. That is a fair question by the official opposition, it is a fair question by independent child care providers, and it is a fair question by independent religious schools.

It is a fair question for parents across the province, because they want to choose where their child goes for care. They also want to be part of the decision-making process, which is why the other day in question period—I believe it was on Monday—I asked the minister why she thinks she's more suitable in choosing my child's care than me. These are discussions my husband and I should have. In fact, regardless of what people's family situation at home is, the parent or the person responsible for a child should have a part of that decision-making. I don't think that's unreasonable, Speaker. In fact, I think you would probably agree with me that you should have a hand in raising your child. That's not the government's job. Parents should be responsible. They should have choice.

1730

I remember recently visiting Cambridge with a friend of mine, Barbara Bierman; this was a big issue for her. I mentioned to you that I had recently been in Thornhill with my colleague from Thornhill, and I spoke with some rabbis there who spoke to me about this. I know tomorrow I'll be back in Ottawa and speaking to some independent child care operators. Coincidentally, Speaker, I have a Montessori beside my constituency office, and I've spoken with them as well in the past.

So this is not even a new issue. I think it has been widely recognized that the government was going to

pursue this type of legislation to prohibit independent child care across the province, whether it was unlicensed or licensed.

The government likes to talk about everything being illegal, but at the end of the day, if there are complaints and the government is ignoring them, whether something is licensed or not is a moot point because the government isn't following through on what their fundamental responsibilities are. The Ombudsman himself said just yesterday, on the 22nd, that the ministry failed in its obligations. In fact, I'll just talk a little bit about that.

He said there are some 823,000 children of school age in unlicensed daycares across the province.

"As lax as the rules are for unlicensed daycares, they were barely being enforced by a bureaucracy that shied away from inspections and investigations and preferred to use soft tools of encouragement instead."

"This isn't just about an old law that doesn't work; it's about a government that has put kids at risk through years of bad administration and neglect."

Those are words from the Ombudsman. He is the one who suggested that the failures of the past—the reason we need to bring in greater safeguards is the result of failure. So you're now asking this Liberal government to take on more responsibility for the care of our children while eliminating 140,000 child care spaces, yet for the past decade, "[I]t's about a government that has put kids at risk through years of bad administration and neglect," in the words of the Ombudsman."

The enforcement unit is how the ministry is trying to deal with its enforcement and inspection issues, but this is where the problems were in the beginning. So we're now to trust the unit that has failed.

The Ombudsman is not recommending that all daycares be licensed, either, Speaker. He does not want complete licensing, but he has suggested that we need a central registry for unlicensed daycares and to enhance and toughen up the standards. In fact, I would say that anybody who has an unlicensed daycare, that is actually serious about operating a child care facility in their home—or a Jewish day school or a Christian or whatever religious school or any Montessori—would welcome tougher standards. Who among us disagrees with keeping our children safe? Who among us disagrees with parental choice? Who among us disagrees with having responsibility for parents and child care operators? None of us do.

But I'll tell you something, Speaker: This bill will take away parental responsibility. It will take away parental choice. In doing so, it will also eliminate 140,000 child care spaces that are accessible and affordable in communities across this province, but in particular in rural and suburban communities, particularly in those fast-growing areas where you see a lot of mothers open up child care spots in their community.

I know two, for example. Karen Fromm is a friend of mine. She had operated an in-home child care. She's one of the most caring and compassionate people I know.



Kim Sheldrick is another person who operated an in-home child care facility in a rural area, an underserved area. She's probably one of the greatest community volunteers I've ever met. But under this legislation, the government presumes that these two fine, upstanding citizens, one of whom is running for council in the city of Ottawa, are unworthy to not only look after their own children but others'.

Doing so also takes away the choice of people like me: mothers and fathers of children under the age of 12 who may want their child to be cared for by their grandmother or by the next door neighbour who has been volunteering at a school that their child goes to for the past 40 years. That happens to be my direct example, Speaker, my contribution in this debate, because that's what I chose. That's what my husband and I chose, because that's what works for our family.

They're also suggesting here that if a neighbour like Kim Sheldrick wants to open her home, that shouldn't happen. I disagree fundamentally with that. I believe in parental choice, I believe in parental responsibility and I think there needs to be more of that. That is why I've stood, throughout my career in this assembly, for those basic principles of parental responsibility and parental choice.

In fact, if you look back in January 2006, during that really long campaign period for the federal election—it was just before I was elected. At the time, John Baird was running for the Harper Conservatives, and I hosted a press conference for the then leader of the official opposition, Stephen Harper, who was a Conservative candidate to be prime minister; he wasn't quite there yet.

We went to my daughter's Gymboree, and Mr. Harper talked about the universal child care benefit, the \$100 a month. That allowed parents like me to talk about parental choice and where we wanted to send our children for our own child care. I used that money to put my daughter there. In fact, if you come to my office, Speaker, there are three pictures—one of which is endorsed by Sheila Copps—talking about that program, with Stephen Harper holding my little daughter, Victoria, who was just less than a year old.

A few months later, I was elected to this place, and the full-day kindergarten debate emerged. I have been very consistent on this, because I believe that as a parent I should have the right to choose where my child goes for care. At the same time, as a parent, I have a responsibility to ensure that my child is placed in quality and suitable care. But the government of the day—and bless them; I think they come from the right place. A lot of the values that I have, I share with every member here. We all value, for example, our Constitution. We all want a safe environment. But there are places where we do differ.

They think that they as a government should do everything for everyone, regardless of what the cost is. On the other hand, as Progressive Conservatives, we believe in an element of self-reliance. We believe in safe streets and strong families. As Progressive Conservatives, we believe that we should ensure that parents have choice, but

they also have to be responsible for their actions. Everyone should be responsible for their actions.

But they, as Liberals, want to take that responsibility away. They, as Liberals, want to have that responsibility. They want to make our choices for us. That's their prerogative; they're entitled to have that as their belief system, and they're entitled to have that as their core and fundamental value. I just don't agree with it.

When you look at, for example, full-day learning, or even Bill 10, what you're seeing is a government that wants to make choices for parents and take away their responsibility. In so doing, they will eliminate 140,000 child care spaces, making it tougher for people in rural communities and suburban communities to get accessible, affordable care.

As my colleague from Thornhill points out, if your child is at a child care centre or an independent school close to your home and they can go there, it's better for the child because they're in their own community. They're spending less time in the car. There's less gridlock for mom and dad driving all over the place.

These are arguments from another member of this assembly. There are 107 of us here. We all have different perspectives on a variety of things, but the things that unite each of the caucuses are their fundamental beliefs, and why they choose a \$10 membership card to be part of that political party. I don't begrudge anyone here for having different views on certain things than me; in fact, I encourage it. That's why we're in a place of democracy, a place of great debate, just like we are here.

But if there's one thing I can do, it's highlight the challenges that this bill will have, and what the impact will be, not only on the child care operators, but on the families that rely on them and the children who appreciate the care they are receiving in those areas.

#### 1740

In the limited time that I have left, I want to congratulate my colleague from Simcoe North. He has done with this bill like he has done with other pieces of legislation that have been under his charge as an official opposition critic, most notably with the College of Trades. By the end of this, he'll know more than the minister will ever know, and he will forget more than the minister will ever know, on Bill 10, because that is the type of vigour and passion he brings to a legislative debate. I'm sure you'll recall the same thing with the College of Trades. I want to congratulate him for that and I want to assure the stakeholders who are watching at home that there will be no more committed person to advocate on their behalf than, of course, Garfield Dunlop, the member from Simcoe North.

Finally, I want to say to the members opposite, particularly to the government, that I encourage them to allow this bill to travel. During the minority Parliament, we didn't travel at all. I must say, given the fact that the people who are affected by this won't have the resources to travel to Toronto, that they are not professional lobbyists, and that many parents simply cannot come to Queen's Park in order to talk about the impact of this

debate, I would urge the government—particularly the government House leader, but in addition, I think, the Minister of Education—to set the right tone and send this bill throughout the rest of Ontario so that people in Ottawa and Owen Sound, and Sudbury and Windsor, and London and Kitchener, and Kingston and the Islands will have an opportunity to share their opinion on what the impact will be with this legislation. I believe that if they do that, they will send the right message to parents as well.

I look forward to engaging in this debate and I look forward to defending the people who feel they need to be defended against this Liberal government's Bill 10.

Thank you very much. I've enjoyed my debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm very pleased to be able to stand up to speak to Bill 10 today. Even though it's only two minutes, I know I'll have my time to really get into the depth and the teeth that we need to be talking about when it comes to this bill.

I was the MPP who asked the Ombudsman to investigate the system to see where we went wrong and how we can do better—or how they went wrong, not I. The report was absolutely scathing. As I continue to read through this, I find more and more things that are just simply appalling in the state of the system and the way it was. I'll just talk about a few things here and maybe make a few quotes from the Ombudsman.

"Our investigation revealed just how bad it was—and believe me, our title, Careless about Child Care, is putting it mildly."

"As lax as the rules are for unlicensed daycares, they were barely being enforced by a bureaucracy that shied away from inspections and investigations and preferred to use soft tools of encouragement instead."

I believe, actually, that the member before me spoke about that, and it's so true. The government has said that they are putting out tools to make things better. They've put in six new inspectors—six, to cover our entire province. How are we possibly going to be able to do this?

There are quotes right here. Use of technology—this was one of the persons. Ministry staff said, "We're so busy. It's not that we don't want children to be protected, but please don't go out looking for them, because we can't handle what we have now."

We have a major crisis on our hands here. If we don't get this right, if we don't work together to make sure that we're saving our children in this province, the problems are going to continue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I want to thank the members for Simcoe North and Nepean–Carleton for raising my blood pressure on a Thursday afternoon.

I'm the parent of a five-year-old. My wife and I, over the last four years, have experienced the trials and tribulations, the stresses and joys of trying to find adequate care for our daughter. I'm very pleased that she's now in

SK, so that makes it easier for us, as well as hundreds of thousands of other parents across this province.

But to hear those comments from members of the opposition this afternoon—first of all, one of the members being somewhat challenged about understanding the rules of the House—but not reading the Ombudsman's report fully. The Ombudsman is very clear in praising the government in the actions that we've already taken. This bill, when passed, will implement 35 of his recommendations, in addition to the ones that we're already working on, and we'll continue to work on this.

To suggest that 140,000 daycare spaces are going to disappear is utter nonsense. It's fearmongering. To suggest that parental choice is going to be taken away is utter nonsense.

I'm very proud to be sitting on this side of the House—because in the last election, my opponent said that full-day early childhood education is a waste of money. The member opposite said the government is getting into the babysitting business. Well, first of all, early childhood care is a lot more than babysitting. And this government isn't proposing to get into that business. We're proposing to regulate it properly.

I welcome constructive criticism from the opposition—that is their job—but some of what I heard today was not.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm happy to speak briefly on this subject. We often hear about the nanny state, and when it comes to child care I guess it's a bit of a pun there.

I'm somebody who has four children, and I always worked part-time and ran my own business, so I think I have a fair amount of experience in terms of child care. I've always believed that the closer to home your kids were—if they couldn't be in your own home, somewhere nearby—the happier the kids would be. I felt that my kids had great neighbourhood support, even if it wasn't always for child care.

I think it's very important to know your neighbourhood. I think it's very important for kids to know their neighbourhood. I think that's what's so wonderful about many of the home cares that we have across the province: It's often in the neighbourhood; people can walk there. They don't need to drive to pick up kids; they don't need to drive to drop off kids. It provides a sort of community instead of having deserted neighbourhoods—and where kids are basically being institutionalized in big, big centres, leaving the neighbourhoods very quiet. Oftentimes, in a lot of neighbourhoods, the only people who are around during the day are the dog walkers or people who are providing some kind of child care, either to their own kids or other people's kids—and I believe that's what makes communities safe and healthy. I think that's what we want: a healthy environment.

I think that too often we get too involved in people's lives, and I'm concerned, as the member from Nepean–Carleton mentioned, that we're going to drive things underground. I think that's not what we want.



I think that we need to find ways to actually encourage more kids to be raised in homes, their homes as well as their neighbourhood homes.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** This bill, G10, and this whole issue of unlicensed child care centres in our province—it's a very emotional issue because it's about our kids. It's about our children.

I want to thank the member from Nepean—Carleton and the member from Simcoe North for their comments and their insight into the bill.

I want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain as well, for being the person who had the courage to actually write a letter to the Ombudsman long before bill G10 was introduced in this House.

We lost four kids in the last year in this province at unlicensed daycares, and that is just totally unacceptable.

There are 113 recommendations. We hear that 35 of those recommendations have been implemented. That's great. But there are still quite a few more that need to be implemented.

To the issue of the number of people who actually work in this program: My simple math is, if there are 800,000 kids in unregulated daycare—and I know that number could be a little lower, but it could be much higher, because there is no central registry to determine how many there are—that's 16,000 children who are out there per worker in that program. That's only if those people are actually front-line workers, not including managers, directors and commissioners of programs.

I don't know how adding six people to this program is actually going to get us through another, I don't know, 80 recommendations in any short order. I think what you need to do is to put some real resources to these recommendations and make sure they get implemented in a very timely manner.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now go back to the member for Simcoe North. You have two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I want to thank the members from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Hamilton Mountain, Thornhill and Welland for their comments, and in particular my colleague from—

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Nepean—Carleton.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** —Nepean—Carleton.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** She's not here.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** By the way, she's not here right now, but if any of you folks want to buy Girl Guide cookies, they're available in her office. It's probably the only office down here that has Girl Guide cookies for sale.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** They baited you, and you let them.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** You know what? I'm sorry if the minister's not here—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to speak through the Chair—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I apologize.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would say that you have apologized several times. I think now we're starting to take it as though it's a simple matter; it's not a simple matter. We have a little bit of a tradition in this particular room that we tend to observe. When you disrespect the Chair and you start speaking to the member in the NDP, it does not bode well.

I will let you finish your time, but please show respect to the Chair.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her leadership on this in asking the Ombudsman to do that report. Clearly, he showed this government how pathetic a job they've done over the last decade in daycare work—to think they want to rush it through.

The member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, you should be ashamed of yourself and your comments. We're trying to protect our children here. We're trying to protect small businesses. All we're asking for is fair hearings across the province. There's nothing wrong with that. People deserve an opportunity for fair hearings, and I would ask everyone in this House to support that.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock and the position we're in with this debate, this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1753.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
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Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	



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Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones



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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile  
Bill Walker  
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la politique sociale**

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Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon  
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas  
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim





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First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature

# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Monday 27 October 2014**

**Lundi 27 octobre 2014**



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 27 October 2014

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 27 octobre 2014

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** In the members' gallery this morning, I have a former nursing colleague and very good friend, Diane Jolliffe, from Kincardine, and her daughter, Sarah Jolliffe, from grade 11, Kincardine District Secondary School, who has brought along her French foreign exchange student from Grenoble, France, and that is Marine Mannechez. Welcome to Ontario.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** On behalf of all of us, I'd like to welcome Mr. Peter Shurman, member of provincial Parliament for the 39th and 40th Parliaments for the riding of Thornhill, and a great friend to all of us. Welcome, Peter.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'd like to recognize one of today's page captains, from the riding of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ben Wahl, a student from Centennial Public School. I'd also like to welcome Ben's family, who are joining us today in the members' gallery: his parents, Bettina and Scott, and his grandparents, Doreen and John Wahl—who is celebrating his 80th birthday. Happy birthday. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Please join me in welcoming the staff and volunteers of Prostate Cancer Canada, here in the gallery today, to Queen's Park. As my fellow members are aware, Prostate Cancer Canada is Canada's only national foundation dedicated to the elimination of prostate cancer through research, education, support and awareness.

I also welcome all members to join Prostate Cancer Canada in room 230 for their lunch reception right after question period.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, sitting over there beside Peter Shurman, three girls from my riding: my executive assistant in Orillia and the lady who makes me function all the time, Mary Silk; her sister, Cathy Daley, who is from Dufferin-Peel; and a girl who would like to be my older sister, but we're not related at all, and that's Andrea Dunlop. Thank you very much and welcome.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a visitor this week—

**Interjection:** This year?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, I don't get them very often, so maybe it is this year. His name is Len Sedore.

He's with OPSEU, and he came down from Nickel Belt to talk about the privatization of IT services.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** Today I have the privilege of introducing Dave and Sonya Robertson, the parents of page captain Callum, in the west gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'd like to welcome guests joining us today at Queen's Park: OPSEU president Mr. Smokey Thomas; AMAPCEO president Mr. Gary Gannage; OPSEU central bargaining team chair Ms. Roxanne Barnes; OPSEU central bargaining team vice-chair Mr. Ron Langer; and 16 IT professionals here with them today from Ontario government offices in Sudbury, Ottawa, Guelph and Toronto. They too are having a reception at lunch today focused on privatization and the negative effects of it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As is the tradition, I shall maintain it: With us today in the west members' gallery is Mr. Peter Shurman from Thornhill, from the 39th and 40th Parliaments of Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Heckling the introduction of guests, that's an interesting one. That's a new one.

We have in the Speaker's gallery today two distinguished guests: the Honourable André Antoine, the Speaker of the Walloon Parliament of Belgium; and Mr. Frédéric Janssens, the secretary general of the Walloon Parliament. Please join me in welcoming our guests from Belgium.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, last week we learned about an Ottawa man by the name of Eric Law. Mr. Law is 63 years old and has been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, diabetes, cancer behind his right eye and a serious thyroid condition, yet the community care access centre in Champlain that once treated Mr. Law has told him that they are no longer able to provide services to him because of an 11.3% increase in new and sicker patients. I don't know how much sicker you have to get.

Minister, how many people across Ontario are being refused care by their local CCAC because your government wastes money on scandals like eHealth, Ornge, gas plants and MaRS?



**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I, of course, appreciate the question, and I'd be happy to follow up on this individual case that has been referenced by the Leader of the Opposition. It's important that we do whatever we can to ensure that patients with complex needs—it certainly seems that this individual fits into that category—are able to receive the services that they require.

There are 14 CCACs across the province. They are the primary mechanism through which we provide those services—particularly home care but also community services—with many, many transfer payment agencies and individuals that are providing that support.

It's important to note that this year, in the budget, we significantly increased our funding to home and community services by \$260 million.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the minister, Mr. Speaker. It's only going to get worse. As you know the Conference Board of Canada recently reported that even without a single new program, a single new drug or a single new health service, your government will have to increase health funding each year by 4.7% just to accommodate population growth and inflation. That's twice what you budgeted for so far.

1040

Minister, how can you possibly accommodate the needs of an aging population when you're paying \$11 billion in debt interest payments alone this year—\$11 billion—when interest payments are at a 20-year low? What happens when they go up? How many more people won't be able to get front-line health care services?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we are providing more care to individuals like the one referenced by the Leader of the Opposition, and partly because of that \$260-million increase to home and community care, which actually represents a 6% increase in funding for that sector. It has allowed us to do many things, including setting that target of a five-day wait time for individuals from point of assessment to getting their first treatment through home care.

In fact, as I think the member opposite is well aware, we've dramatically increased our funding for CCACs. In fact, we've doubled it in the last decade from just over \$1 billion to \$2.4 billion, where it stands now. That's a significant increase that makes a difference and can translate, actually, very specific to—there are more than a quarter of a million people who are receiving home care through our CCACs, Mr. Speaker, than were a decade ago.

We continue to make those investments. We're seeing the results, the improvement in the quality of care that's so important to those individuals.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Well, Minister, you're already firing health care workers and cutting front-line services. The Timmins and District Hospital is feeling the full brunt of your inability to budget properly and your wasteful spending and inability to set priorities. They currently

face a \$4.5-million deficit, and they're being forced to make tough decisions. They're cutting jobs and cutting services. They're actually laying off 40 health care workers, including nurses, and removing 26 hospital beds.

Will you admit to people like Mr. Law and the people of Timmins that this is just the first of many cuts that you'll be making to health care in Ontario over the next four years because of your fiscal mismanagement?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, I can only imagine how serious the cuts in personnel and health care might have been had the party opposite actually won that last election.

The reality is that the transformation we've made in health care through the action plan for health, through the mechanisms that we put in place to improve the quality of health, through our hospitals and through our home and community care, have already had significant impacts in terms of the delivery of health services.

To get back again to the original component of the member's question on the CCACs, half of patients with complex care needs referred through the hospital had their first service visit within one day, Mr. Speaker. It can't get any better than that. In fact, 90% of patients had their first visit between one and five days.

So we are making a difference, we're improving quality of care, and we're doing it on budget.

## NURSES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Again, my question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. It's obvious that your government's poor fiscal management is affecting front-line health care, whether you want to admit it or not, Minister.

As of August, the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN's wait times were worse than the provincial target in areas like MRIs, CT scans and knee replacements, and this LHIN had the highest overall wait time for cancer surgeries in Ontario. My colleagues and I in the Progressive Conservative caucus believe that the dedicated health care workers in those regions work hard day in and day out to help Ontarians who need their help, but, Minister, you're not giving them the resources and the tools they need to do their job.

Do you really think that cutting 58 registered nursing positions—the equivalent to 110,000 hours of care each year—at St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton is going to help improve wait times in that region?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question.

Mr. Speaker, again, I go back to their commitment to fire 100,000 workers, many of them in the health care sector, many in the education sector. I can only imagine what our health care system would look like now had they won the last election earlier this year.

In fact, when that government was in power, they didn't even measure wait times in our hospitals for important surgical and other procedures. We decided to change that. When we came into government, we began

to measure wait times. In fact, we're now investing \$83 million specifically to address the issue of wait times so that people can get their important procedures, including surgery procedures and cancer treatments, earlier.

When you look at our hospitals, we've lowered wait times. The ER wait times for the sickest patients have been cut, Mr. Speaker, by 29.3%, while at the same time the volumes in our ERs have increased by 39%, so we're making progress because of those investments.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Well, Minister, these cuts are happening, whether you want to admit it or not. They are a result of wasted money, inability to set priorities, and billions of dollars wasted on your gas plants, eHealth, Ornge and MaRS scandals. Ontarians are seeing the effects of your fiscal mismanagement on the front lines of health care.

And it's not just in Hamilton and Timmins. Nurses are being fired across the province: 27 in London, just recently, 22 nurses fired in Muskoka, 40 laid off in Oshawa, 40 in North Bay, another 90 in Ottawa, and I could go on. Minister, can you tell this assembly how many more registered nurses' positions your government will cut throughout the province over this term of office?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I can certainly assure the member opposite that we won't be cutting the 10,000 nursing positions that you cut when your government referred to them as out of date like hula hoops in the 1990s. We're actually increasing the nursing positions—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I'm noticing a trend that I'm going to stop, on both sides. When questions are put and when answers are put, bring it down.

Minister.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's true: The truth demonstrates that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sit down, please. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will come to order, and the member from Huron-Bruce will come to order.

Carry on.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It is a fact that over 24,000 more nurses are working in Ontario since we took office, including more than 4,000 new nurses in 2013 alone, so I don't know where the member opposite is getting his information.

In fact, on our end alone, we've added more than 10,800 RN positions since 2013; and we have programs in place that support them, including the guarantee that they'll get a job coming out of graduation. It gets them on that path for a nursing career. We're continuing to invest in our nurses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** It's interesting when the Liberals talk about nursing cuts when we were in office. They forget to mention the tens of thousands of nurses that we

hired. There was a net increase when we expanded Telehealth—it was started by the NDP—and when we established community care access centres across this province and shifted billions of dollars into front-line community home care, which no other government prior to us dared to do.

Now, the minister asked me where I'm getting my facts. Well, the president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, Linda Haslam-Stroud, said recently, "Ontarians have lost millions of hours of RN care from their hospitals in the past two years because of flatlined hospital funding." She said that your government has cut 1,600 registered nursing positions.

Mr. Speaker, he wants to know where we get the facts. I'm quoting the president of the nurses' association herself. Is she telling the truth? Is she not telling the truth, Minister? Some 1,600 positions—how many more are you going to cut?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex will come to order. I didn't get everyone quiet so that everyone could get their last shots in.

Minister.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should start by saying that Linda is not the president of the RNAO. She's the head of the Ontario Nurses' Association, and when I met her last week—and, quite frankly, the week before—to continue our work with our front-line nurses, with the organizations that so aptly represent them—we are working together to continue to make progress on important issues with our nurses, as we are with all health care professionals.

The member opposite neglects to say that we've opened 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics in this province, as well, so we're not only expanding the use of our nurses, but we're also expanding their scope of practice so that they can do more, so that those well-trained RNs and RPNs can actually provide the care that they're trained to do in our community and in our hospitals right across this province. They're doing a fantastic job. I don't know why the member doesn't realize that there's always more work to be done—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Be seated, please. New question.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Selling off our hydro system didn't make sense when Mike Harris did it, and it doesn't make sense when the Liberals are doing it. We've seen this movie before, Speaker, and we know how it ends. If this government wants to ensure that Ontario can pay the bills, will they say no to privatizing hydro and say yes to closing HST loopholes that will cost us billions of dollars?



## 1050

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can tell you is that on this side, we are saying yes to building transportation infrastructure. We are saying yes to building highways, bridges and transit. These are important public assets that we have to pay for, so we have engaged with experts to see how we can recycle the assets that we hold so we can build that transportation infrastructure that Ontarians so desperately need.

Speaker, we need to maximize the benefit for Ontarians. We actually laid out this plan in the budget. We laid out this plan in our platform. What's interesting about this is that the leader of the third party actually ran on our fiscal plan, which included maximizing assets.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Liberal government plan is one that gives the wealthiest corporations a brand new loophole so that they can write the HST off of the company car and box seats for the Leafs, while at the same time Ontarians will have to add private hydro profits to their monthly bills because the Liberals are privatizing local hydro utilities.

Both schemes help out those who need the help the least and leave Ontarians falling behind. Is this the Liberals' definition of "progressive"?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Speaker, do you know what was progressive? The budget that we introduced in this House, twice. That talked a lot about investing in our people, investing in infrastructure, investing in public transit, investing in our children's future.

The third party recognized the opportunities that existed in that budget for the benefit of all Ontarians and they chose not to support it. Ontarians did choose to support that budget. They did realize and recognize that we need to optimize our assets in order to contribute to those investments that are going to get better returns. That's exactly what we're doing, and we'll continue to do so.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Liberals like to say it was short-sighted when the Harris government sold the 407, but they're directing the sequel to that movie here and now. Stopping new HST loopholes will keep money in the provincial treasury year after year after year, money that could be used for projects like infrastructure. Selling our local hydro utilities will bring in short-term money, but leave us all paying more in the long run.

Liberals used to oppose privatization. How did they lose their way?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP did the following: They did nine private power deals when they were in office.

We have made it clear that we are not going to sell off our assets. What we are doing is maximizing the opportunities to generate more revenue, more dividends for those investments we're making in transit. That is all we're doing. It would be irresponsible, I believe, for

someone not to look at the opportunities that exist within government. They choose to turn a blind eye, yet they did exactly what they said we're threatening to do. They, in fact, made private power deals.

We are saying we're going to protect the public interest. It's the priority of what we do, and what we said to the council. That's exactly how we're going to proceed.

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, we didn't sell off public utilities.

My next question is for the Acting Premier. Auto sector jobs are at the heart of the Windsor economy and are critical to our provincial recovery. I know first-hand what an auto sector job means. I know that it can raise a family. As people in this room know, my father was an auto worker, so I know what that means. That's why, like so many people in Windsor, I was pretty frustrated to learn that Ford's new engine line is going to be located in Mexico and not in Windsor.

This isn't good enough for the people of Windsor, nor for the people of Ontario. Does the Deputy Premier get that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Our government is absolutely committed to partnering with the auto sector. We have a very strong track record. In fact, I think there is no government in the history of this province that has done more to support the auto sector. Speaker, we will do that. We will invest taxpayer dollars only when there is a strong return for Ontarians.

I do want to say thank you to Jerry Dias and to Unifor for really working hard to seek out some possibilities. I want to say thank you to Ford for their ongoing investments in Ontario.

Since 2003, we've made strategic investments with five auto assemblers in Ontario, as well as numerous auto plants across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, Ontario's unemployment rate has been above the national average for years, and this province still has not recovered the 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost during the recession. Windsor has been one of the hardest-hit communities in this province. After almost a dozen years in government, don't the Liberals think it's finally time for a comprehensive auto strategy in this province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Our government is proud of the progress we've made, but we certainly acknowledge there is more to do. We have created over a half a million—514,700 to be exact—jobs since our recessionary low in 2009. The unemployment rate has dropped to 7.1%—still too high—down from the recessionary high of 9.4%. Net new jobs since October 2003: 723,900.

The member opposite, the leader of the third party, is trying to create the idea that we're not getting the job done on this side. In fact, we are. The numbers speak for themselves, and we will continue to work hard. We have a strategy to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The fact of the matter is, when it came to bringing Ford's engine plant to Windsor, the Liberals got caught flat-footed. This won't be the last time that an opportunity for new auto sector jobs comes along. We need a comprehensive strategy that puts us on the front foot.

When is this government going to get serious about auto sector jobs?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just to repeat, no government in the history of this province has done more for the auto sector than this government. Let me remind the member opposite of some of those investments: \$100 million for the Oakville assembly complex in 2004, \$98 million for the Essex plant in 2010, almost \$70.9 million for additional investment in Oakville in 2013 to modernize and provide a global platform in that plant for decades to come. Speaker, there is a long list. Those are just the Ford investments. We have made other investments where they make sense for the people of this province.

We will always work hard, we will always do our due diligence because we really believe in this sector, we believe in Ontario's leadership in the auto sector, and we will continue to make investments where they make sense.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Deputy Premier and it concerns the MaRS bailout.

We now know that the government changed the rules for Infrastructure Ontario loans so that it could cut a special deal for MaRS after Alexandria Real Estate couldn't finish the phase 2 parking lot, let alone the upper floors—throwing more good money after bad.

Since 2011, the government has known about the details of the MaRS phase 2 loan agreement, yet has not been open and transparent about it. If no bank or conventional lender was willing to back the MaRS project with only 10% of it pre-leased, 30% to 40% lower than conventional industry standards, why did the minister change the Infrastructure Ontario rules so that the government could bail out MaRS with money we don't have?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think we have to start with what MaRS is and what MaRS does: It is a world-renowned centre of excellent innovation and technology. It's an important part of the innovation landscape in Ontario.

I would love, in the supplementary, to hear exactly what their plan would have been. Would you have left that hole in the ground, surrounded by those construction hoardings? Is that your plan?

1100

Our plan: We had a problem. We've worked to address the problem. The entire loan will be repaid. This is a very good deal for Ontarians. I know you don't like it,

but I'd love to hear what you would have done in the same circumstances.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** It is true: The government has a problem and continues to have a problem, and the government continues to lose credibility by the day when it comes to their promises on openness and transparency. They're not being upfront about the cuts they're making to vital health care services, as we learned this morning, due to their years of fiscal mismanagement going back to 2003, and they're continuing to hide relevant facts on the \$224-million bailout to MaRS.

The Deputy Premier should explain why they're breaking their promises to be open and transparent. My question to her is this: If, indeed, the MaRS documents the government refuses to release have commercially sensitive information, as they claim, then why won't they let the estimates committee examine them in camera?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What you're not going to hear from the opposition, but what I think the people of Ontario need to know, is that the value of the MaRS building is greater than our total investment in that building.

This is no bailout. This is an investment. We have an asset that's worth—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to come to members and give them a warning, and you know what that means. That's enough.

Carry on, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We have an asset that's repeatedly been valued at or above the amount that has been invested.

We have established a panel, led by two eminent Ontarians, Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson, to give us independent advice on what we do going forward. We will ensure that what we do is in the best interests of the taxpayers.

#### GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. The Ontario government directly employs more than 3,600 qualified IT professionals. However, over the last five years, the portion of the government's IT budget that has been outsourced to the private sector has increased by 63%. During the 2013-14 fiscal year alone, the government spent \$703 million on private sector IT services. This includes hiring almost 1,500 fee-for-service consultants at a total cost of \$131 million.

Why is the government expanding its use of private sector consultants when a 2012 consultant's report commissioned by the Ministry of Government Services found that several key IT services cost two to three times more when provided by the private sector?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We are investing in a number of areas, trying to ensure that we procure appropriately. We have a number of IT consultants and contracts that we put out. We use RFP and procurement practices that are



open and transparent. We will continue to invest in those matters that will improve our overall productivity.

I know we're managing our user consultants through a three-pronged approach: by transferring work to government staff, by creating a central pool of government IT staff to work with government-wide projects and by centralizing the acquisition of IT consultations.

We invest a tremendous amount of money and we want to make certain that it's appropriately invested, and we will continue to take proper cautionary measures to ensure that it's spent appropriately.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The problem, Minister, is that IT outsourcing ends up costing taxpayers more money, and they don't get value for that. The government should have learned this with eHealth. The Auditor General at the time found that the eHealth program branch alone was engaging more than 300 private IT consultants compared to fewer than 30 full-time ministry IT employees. Even a number of senior management positions were held by consultants.

Why is this government continuing on the wasteful and expensive path of outsourcing the government's IT services when it has thousands of highly competent IT professionals already in its employ? You are looking to save money. If you want to save money, contract in; stop contracting out.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We have a strong record of reducing the use of consultants across the government. In fact, we have turned to IT consultants when we need to gain external advice and specialized expertise. Since 2003, a total of 1,519 consultant positions government-wide have been approved for conversion into OPS staff positions, resulting in ongoing savings of approximately \$60 million per year, and of those converted positions, 1,335 were IT consultants. We recently approved the conversion of an additional 90 IT consultant positions to full-time equivalents. This will result in a further \$3.6 million in annual savings at maturity.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to hire. We recognize the importance of that sector. It's essential that we have good people doing it and save money all the while.

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister, it's important that you understand why your lack of transparency around health care cuts and bad MaRS bailout deals makes people nervous. Your government recently issued necessary new directives on Ebola preparedness requirements for Ontario hospitals. These new Ebola initiatives and directives will come with costs that need to be absorbed by the existing capped funding folders.

Minister, can you confirm that even with your government's huge deficit, your Ministry of Health will reimburse hospitals for the cost of these preparations?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Yes, I can confirm this.

Mr. Speaker, this gives me the opportunity to talk about the preparations that Ontario is making and has made with regard to preparing for the possibility that an Ebola case may arrive within this province. We've been working for a number of months now with our front-line health care providers, with our hospitals, with our community agencies, with our public health specialists, with Public Health Ontario and with the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health to ensure that we have put into place the protocols, procedures and measures so that at every level of this province, we are protected and have taken sufficient measures to ensure that, should a case arrive on Ontario shores, we'll be prepared to deal with that effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that we're focusing specifically and particularly on the health and safety of our health care workers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: There may be many other costs associated with the Ministry of Health's new directive—for example, overtime pay for training and staffing increases due to the need to increase rotations for exposed workers. It's important that our patients and our front-line workers are safe, but your plan isn't credible without knowing how you'll pay for it. You're cutting nurses, and we're wondering where this funding will come from. The hospitals in my region are asking me these questions.

Minister, with your Liberal government's spiralling deficit and a health care budget that is already strapped to the max, how will you pay for Ebola emergency management?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, I just told the member opposite how we would pay for that, and we've asked our hospitals, our front-line facilities and our acute care centres to actually keep a record of those additional costs so that we can then, at a later date, come back and ensure that those costs are covered.

I'm not sure what the member opposite is suggesting—if we somehow shouldn't be doing that or providing the level of preventive care that we are, given the current risk, the potential for an Ebola case arriving here.

But I want to assure the Ontario public that we are taking those measures. It's important that Ontarians understand as well that cost is not a factor when it comes to the health and safety particularly of our front-line health care workers, who are working so hard to keep Ontarians safe. In fact, I believe the way that we keep Ontarians safe and secure is by keeping our front-line health care workers safe and secure. That's why we're working so closely with them on this Ebola risk.

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est également pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

This morning, it was revealed that hundreds of paramedics in the GTA were prepared to do a work refusal—to refuse work—because they had no training to deal

with Ebola. First responders had no information on the disease, no idea how to use their protective gear and no guarantee that the gear was even fluid-resistant and up to the job.

Our paramedics are on the front line each and every day, but they can only do their job if they receive support from the Ministry of Health. Why was this government prepared to put our front-line health care workers in harm's way without doing everything possible to keep them safe?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, I disagree. We are doing everything possible to keep our front-line health care workers safe, just as I mentioned in the answer to the last question. That includes our first responders, our EMS—emergency medical services—as well.

In fact, as a result of my commitment to work closely with all front-line health care workers, including EMS, I committed to setting up a table—specifically, a minister's advisory table—of those front-line health care workers, including EMS. Last week we had our first meeting, and members representing the EMS and ambulance community were present there for that discussion we had.

We're going to be meeting on a regular basis. We've designated within the EMS system, as we've designated in hospitals, precisely how that aspect of this challenge will be managed.

1110

I have to say as well that we will add the issue to a directive focused on our hospitals. We will be issuing, through the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health, a directive specific to our front-line EMS, ambulance and emergency first responders.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Our paramedics and our first responders are called on to do tough work each and every day, but they should not be forced to do this at the risk of their own safety or the safety of their family. From nurses to emergency responders, our health professionals are worried about our Ebola preparedness, and this does not match what the minister is talking about. How can you explain the disconnect between what you are saying regarding Ontario's preparedness versus our front-line workers saying the exact opposite?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Due to the close collaboration and coordination with our front-line health care workers, we are getting prepared. We're taking what's known in public health as the precautionary principle to make sure that we're doing everything possible to ensure that our front-line health care workers are safe, to the point where Doris Grinspun, the CEO of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, said approximately 10 days ago, "I am feeling very comfortable that we have a minister that listens, a minister that responds."

In fact, the federal health minister, Rona Ambrose, as well indicated that as a result of the measures Ontario has put in place, this "really sets the bar for the country."

This table that we've set up, the minister's advisory table for health care providers, of those front-line health care staff—I'm listening to them because I know that

they are best placed to be able to provide us with the advice that we need to ensure that we're keeping those health care workers safe and secure.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels, l'honorable Yasir Naqvi.

One of the regrettable, tragic and wholly unanticipated duties of a member of provincial Parliament is to attend the funerals of young men who have been senselessly murdered. I had to perform such a duty not long ago while attending the funeral of 19-year-old Hamid Aminzada, a young man who was fatally injured while trying to break up a fight at NACI, North Albion Collegiate Institute.

On behalf of the Premier and, indeed, all members here, I offered the father, Mr. Sabir Aminzada, as well as the principal of NACI, Mr. Naeem Siddiq, both a figurative and physical embrace, as well as a pledge of support.

People in my riding of Etobicoke North and beyond deserve better: safe communities without fear of violence or gang reprisals. On behalf of my community, I look to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for help and direction in this matter.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for a very important and pertinent question. First of all, our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the victims of the recent acts of violence in Toronto. Our government is firmly committed to helping at-risk youth achieve a brighter future through a wide range of programs and initiatives.

Our recent youth action plan provides young people with supports and services to help them thrive and succeed. We're investing over \$8 million through the Safer and Vital Communities Grant focusing on community engagement, community mobilization, prevention and, of course, education. We have also provided over \$100 million to combat guns and gangs under the Provincial Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy, commonly known as PAVIS, and the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy, TAVIS.

These programs help communities target illegal gangs, drugs and weapons activities in communities. Of course, we need to do more to protect the young people in our communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you, Minister Naqvi, for your response. I know that you and I are both fathers of sons, so you no doubt can sympathize with the staggering loss that these families feel. Unfortunately, it seems that violence of many motivations is now part of our society. There is, of course, no simple solution, quick fix or instant remedy—we all appreciate that—to this complex issue of youth violence. Perhaps focusing purely on fighting gangs and guns will not fully achieve our goal of making our streets safer, but it is a welcome initiative.



Nevertheless, I want to know on behalf of my community and others that are affected, what is our government doing regarding youth crime prevention?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Thanks again to the member from Etobicoke North for raising this very serious and important question. As far as I'm concerned, as the Minister of Children and Youth Services, one child or youth death in Ontario is one too many. We want to ensure our communities are safe for our children. We want to focus on prevention in terms of these tragedies so that they don't happen again. We want to provide youth with opportunities so they can succeed.

In 2013-14, we increased the number of youth outreach workers by one third, from 62 to 98. These workers support over 13,600 hard-to-reach youth and young people across this province. Our government also established the Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities for youth to give their voice on how to improve the delivery and design of government programs and services. As mentioned before, we have the youth action plan.

We must work together and invest in our youth to ensure that we stop this violence before it starts.

#### HOME CARE

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Your government came to power with a promise to focus on home care and deliver more of it to Ontarians. Instead, Ontarians are seeing quite the opposite.

Many residents in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry have seen their services either reduced or dropped altogether. The funding formula has been changed so that seniors who were on waiting lists just a few months ago no longer qualify, due to new budget restrictions. Our seniors population is growing, yet your government refuses to fund the CCACs to meet the demand.

Minister, will you commit to sufficient and predictable funding for the Champlain CCAC or will you continue to let our seniors down?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. Again, I know we all acknowledge the important work that our CCACs do, and the health care workers and non-health care workers, the field of individuals who provide that important care at a moment in time when Ontarians most need it—of course, ideally, in their home or as close to home as possible.

But, Mr. Speaker, we actually made a very strong commitment in the last budget, that was passed earlier this year, of an increase of \$260 million, which is roughly a 6% increase in the funding provided for home and community care.

In a more general sense as well—apart from the fact that the party opposite and the member opposite actually did not support that budget—since 2003 we have

virtually doubled the amount of financial support that goes through our CCACs to assist people in home care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** In this current fiscal year, the Champlain CCAC is experiencing a 12% increase in demand for its services, yet has been allocated less than half of that amount to meet the demand, and patients are suffering. Experts agree that money spent on home care not only saves the health care system money, but allows one to enjoy the comfortable surroundings of their home.

At the same time, the Champlain CCAC has experienced a 130% increase in the number of employees on the sunshine list since 2010. Minister, when demand for an agency's services increases, you don't double the high earners. You double the front-line workers and the services they provide. Residents of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry agree. If the minister does too, does he plan to act accordingly?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** There's no question that there is always more work that can be done. We all acknowledge the important work, and the priority that we must pay to providing those services at home or as close to home as possible. By providing that home care, it actually lessens the burden on our hospitals and our ERs, so it has an impact throughout the health care system.

I mentioned the \$270-million commitment in this year's budget for home and community care. That commitment actually increases to over \$750 million by 2017.

We are making these investments. We are recognizing just how important—and from a cost-benefit perspective as well. It's not only better in terms of quality of care and quality of life for the individuals that can benefit from home and community care, but also, from a cost-effective perspective, it makes sense to invest these health care dollars in providing that quality of care for people as close to home as possible, when and where they need it.

#### NORTHERN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** To the Minister of Transportation: Highway 105 is the only highway serving the communities of Ear Falls and Red Lake in my riding. This past summer, the Ministry of Transportation replaced every culvert along the route, but instead of paving over the cut sections, they left gravel. Because the ministry did not place adequate warning signage, these gravel sections often catch people off guard. Drivers can often lose control, and some vehicles have been damaged.

Winter is coming, and these risky gravel sections need to be properly maintained and repaired, but the ministry and the private contractor can't seem to agree on who is in charge of paving these sections. Each time the ministry gave me a repair date, the date came and went and nothing happened.

1120

Snowplows have already been out along this highway, and snow is expected again in Red Lake tomorrow. Will

the minister tell us for certain when Highway 105 will be completed?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I appreciate receiving that question from the member opposite. I know that we had a chance to exchange correspondence last week here in this Legislature. I also know that staff in my office have been in touch with that member's constituency office. I certainly understand and respect where she's coming from, and I know that she's doing a job to represent her community. I know that my office will continue to work closely with her office and her community to make sure that this can be addressed.

The member opposite mentioned the matter, or the issue, of winter maintenance. It's why I was very happy to stand in my place in the House last week and discuss the significant additional resources that we're bringing to bear this year to anticipate, deal with and be prepared for the upcoming winter season.

Of course, I'll continue to work closely with that member and her community to make sure that we can be prepared for the upcoming winter season. I look forward to the ongoing conversation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** The people of Ear Falls and Red Lake depend on Highway 105. They can't simply take another route if the road conditions on Highway 105 are unsafe. It shouldn't be the case that only the squeaky wheel gets the grease, and people will only receive action after I literally hound this government.

This ministry keeps cutting corners when it comes to maintaining Highway 105. This highway has been classified as a low priority for snow clearance. Now the ministry has left this culvert repair job unfinished, with winter fast approaching.

There will be accidents this winter if the ministry does not properly manage the gaps between the MTO and its private contractors. Will the minister personally make sure this job gets done within days, and not weeks?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Speaker, as I said in my response to the initial question, I'm very happy to be able to continue to work alongside this member to deliver positive results for her community. Again, it's one of the reasons I was so happy to answer a question in the House last week from the member for Newmarket–Aurora, and very happy to participate in an announcement the week before, where we talked specifically about the new resources we're bringing to bear both in southern and northern Ontario.

Last winter season, for example, our government launched or put 55 new pieces of equipment on the roads in northern Ontario to help make sure, as the season last year finished, that we were prepared to deal with the weather. We are doing the same thing again this year, not only in the north but also in the south.

Again, I undertake to continue working with this member and all members in this Legislature to make sure that our roads and highways across Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** —that we're prepared for the upcoming winter season, because road safety is one of my most important priorities.

## PROVINCIAL PARKS

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. No matter what time of the year it is, parks provide great opportunities for families and visitors to enjoy recreational activities and learn more about conservation and our environment.

In my town, Presqu'île Provincial Park is open for day use all year round. It is home to over 10 kilometres of trails that travel through several habitats and fantastic vantage points along Lake Ontario.

Presqu'île also provides natural heritage education programs, which include curriculum-based children's programs for schools in the spring and fall. I'd be remiss if I didn't plug the Christmas at Presqu'île arts and crafts show, which is coming up on November 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could the minister please explain to the House what our government is doing to ensure that Ontarians from all parts of the province have the opportunity to enjoy our provincial parks?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for his question and for drawing attention to a very important part of Ontario's social and natural heritage.

Our parks are a great way for families to be active and learn more about wildlife and Ontario's environment. Ontario has 109 operating parks across the province, from Quetico Provincial Park in Atikokan to Wheatley Provincial Park in southwestern Ontario.

These parks see over 8.5 million visitors each year, supporting jobs and strengthening local communities. Residents and tourists from around the world come to our parks and enjoy spectacular views and take part in unique outdoor activities. In fact, Ontario Parks is the largest provider of outdoor recreation opportunities in our province.

Our government remains committed to ensuring that all Ontarians, whether in the north or the south, have access to provincial parks. I would encourage everyone in this House and families from all parts of Ontario to visit one of our provincial parks this fall and take advantage of the more than 2,200 kilometres of trails through some of the province's most spectacular scenery.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you to the minister for his answer.

As the 2014 camping season comes to a close in many of our provincial parks, my constituents are already anticipating next summer and are looking to reserve their campsites for 2015.

Speaker, I understand that two years ago our government was faced with a difficult decision regarding the operating status of Fushimi Lake, René Brunelle and Ivanhoe Lake provincial parks. I'm pleased that this gov-



ernment implemented a pilot program and formed partnerships with local municipalities to maintain camping for the past two years.

The pilot program with these three parks has now ended. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could the minister please update the House on the status of these parks and confirm if they will be open for the 2015 camping season?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Again, I want to thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for this very timely and thoughtful question. I am pleased to inform the House that our government will be operating, in fact, Ivanhoe, René Brunelle and Fushimi Lake provincial parks for the 2015 camping season.

Speaker, I really want to take a moment, as I did last week and in my phone calls to the local folks, to thank the municipalities, the broader communities, the mayors—everybody who really took this issue to task. They did a great job in putting us in a position, as local municipalities, whereby we are in a position to actually make this announcement and move forward with an extension of this particular pilot program. The partnerships with Hearst, Moonbeam and Timmins were key to providing Ontarians with recreational opportunities in our beautiful parks.

Speaker, this is a fantastic news story. We are very pleased, as a government, to have entered into a partnership where now we are taking full responsibility for the next year on these provincial parks and hopefully looking forward to more positive news in the years to follow.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, with each passing day, the effect of your flawed energy policies becomes more and more apparent. From exasperated seniors to struggling small businesses to manufacturers leaving the province, the results are the same: Ontario's hydro rates are making it uncompetitive in the world market.

Now some more bad news: On Saturday, rates are going up again. They will be up to 14 cents a kilowatt hour, which is more than triple what they were when your party took power.

Skyrocketing hydro rates have become a second tax on manufacturing and small business, which kills jobs or sends them to Mexico. Yet you're still signing expensive contracts for intermittent, unreliable power.

Minister, is it not time to reverse the policies that have made a few Liberal insiders very rich at the expense of everyone else?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member, although I am a bit surprised by the scope of it and how broad the question is, because he did attend my speech to the Ontario Energy Association about two weeks ago, which was a 20-minute speech, and afterwards he told me he agreed with everything that was in it; he couldn't disagree with anything.

Mr. Speaker, as he knows, the Ontario Energy Board does the rating for prices in the province of Ontario, and as of November 1, 2014, the new prices will increase average monthly time-of-use bills by about 1.7%, or 2.3 cents, on the average household.

Our government modernized an electricity system that needed significant upgrading after the Tories. The current price results in electricity bills that are below the forecast we set in the 2013 long-term energy plan.

When I get to the supplementary, I'd be very happy to speak to the industrial rates that he referred to.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker, the minister did deliver a good speech. Unfortunately, his policies are delivering jobs to Mexico.

Minister, you know that by continuing to sign new expensive energy contracts, Ontarians will continue to endure higher prices. You know that when new intermittent energy comes online, you will have to sell more power at a loss to our competitors at times when we don't need it. You know that as peak and off-peak hydro rates rise, Ontario's ability to compete falls.

Minister, I'll ask you again: Will you stop exporting jobs to Mexico and place affordability as a cornerstone of Ontario energy policy?

*Interjections.*

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, the member knows that we had significant price pressures because we converted to a clean system, and we went from deficit to surplus. In those price pressures, we have, over a period of the last several years, created very significant price mitigation measures, including in the industrial sector, expanding the IEI Program so hundreds of newly eligible companies can qualify for electricity rates among the lowest in North America. In Pembroke—his hometown, Mr. Speaker—the MDF paperboard plant has reopened after being accepted into the program, creating 140 new jobs for the area. There are significant companies across the province accessing that. He will also know that in our budget, we had two provisions to mitigate prices further for the industrial sector.

I'm very happy to arrange a briefing for the member so he will learn about how we have taken significant steps to mitigate electricity prices in the province of Ontario.

## MIDWIFERY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Over the past month, hundreds of Ontarians have tweeted the Premier about the value of midwives to the families of this province. #MidwifeMondays, as the campaign is known, has shown an outpouring of support for the services that midwives provide. Yet this Liberal government is refusing to engage in fair negotiations with

midwives, allowing expired contracts and pay inequity to undermine this much-loved health care profession.

It is time for this government to change course, and I think that this Monday is a perfect time to do it. After all of these tweets from all of these families, my question is quite simple: Did the minister get the message?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm really feeling the love this morning from both parties, so I appreciate that.

As a government, we value our midwives. Fortunately, I'm also on the receiving end of those tweets that go to the Premier. I have to say—it might surprise some—that I look forward to Mondays, when I receive 400 or 500 tweets coming not just from midwives but from many individuals who have and are benefiting from our midwives.

Mr. Speaker, we are so committed to ensuring that our midwives have the support that they need to carry out their work effectively. We have increased their compensation on average by 33% since we took office in 2003, but we are working closely with them to ensure we're providing for them not only on the financial side but also in terms of the other supports that are able to make a difference.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, let me give you an idea of the government's record on midwives. First, the Liberal government is refusing to negotiate in good faith and forcing midwives to work without a contract for months on end. Then, the Liberals are refusing to recognize the gender gap that leaves midwives being paid less for work of equal value—less than they deserve. The Liberals are refusing to meet the demand for midwives, meaning that many, many families continue to be turned away from the care they want.

It makes no sense to deny midwives the respect that they deserve. How can the minister explain his stubborn refusal to resume negotiations with midwives and his indefensible opposition to pay equity?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, we've doubled the number of midwives in this province since 2003 to 700 now. The funding for the midwifery program has increased fivefold, from \$23 million in 2003 to \$125 million. In 2003, 8,000 families were able to benefit from midwives; now that figure is 22,000.

I would say, not unimportantly, that I had the honour and privilege with my wife, Sam, of our first and only child being born at home with two midwives. It was an incredible experience. I understand first-hand just how important this resource is, quite frankly a resource that, worldwide, delivers most of the babies born on this planet.

So we are committed. We'll continue to work closely with our midwives. I'm committed to that, and we will continue to grow this important profession.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services and minister responsible

for women's issues. Minister, first of all, I would like to thank you and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, on behalf of my caucus colleagues, for participating in the National Aboriginal Women's Summit last week. I think it is imperative that we as a government stand alongside Ontario's First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban aboriginal communities.

I would also like to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for introducing a private member's motion last week supporting the National Aboriginal Organizations' call to the federal government for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.

I was wondering, Minister, if you could tell us more about your work at the summit, and what work the Ontario Women's Directorate has been doing on this issue.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Thanks to the member from Barrie for her question. As we talked about in the House here last week, during the member from Kingston and the Islands' private member's resolution, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group and the National Aboriginal Women's Summit steering community are leading the development of a socio-economic plan for aboriginal women and girls.

The discussion last week at the summit began the development of this plan. I was very pleased to be there representing our wonderful province, along with my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. We met with leaders, provincial ministers, and senior officials from Canadian provinces and territories to discuss the approach. Unfortunately, the federal government wasn't there, but we did focus on issues around murdered and missing aboriginal children.

Our budget for this year includes \$2 million over two years to support our Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women. This includes five aboriginal organizations and 10 ministries. It's the only committee of this kind. We look forward to the continuing results of that plan in about 18 months.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Thank you to the minister for her response.

Aboriginal women are 2.5 times more likely to experience spousal violence than non-aboriginal women, according to self-reported data. Between 2001 and 2011, at least 8% of all murdered women aged 15 years and older were aboriginal, double their representation in the Canadian population. The RCMP reports that police recorded incidents of aboriginal female homicides and unresolved missing aboriginal women total 1,181 as of November 2013. So this is very important work, and I'm happy to follow the progress of the Ontario Women's Directorate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** There is no question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.



**Hon. David Zimmer:** My visit to the National Aboriginal Women's Summit with Minister MacCharles was very productive. The forum provided an excellent opportunity to share expertise and knowledge, and to work on initiatives including the socio-economic action plan and the national round table.

I was very pleased that all parties present agreed that the next round table will take place on February 15 in the Northwest Territories. The issues we talked about affect all aboriginal women, all Ontarians, indeed all Canadians, and we need to get everyone working together to make progress on this issue.

But it is unfortunate—it is inexcusable—that the federal government chose not to send any representation to that summit. The federal government has a role to play. I urge them to contribute to the upcoming meeting in NWT. To the federal government, I say: Come to the next meeting and do your duty.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe-York.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I beg the indulgence of the House to allow me to introduce belatedly the students of Holy Trinity school from Bradford West Gwillimbury who were able to witness question period this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, and on a reversal—York—Simcoe; Simcoe-York. I do get that wrong from time to time.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SCHOOL TRUSTEES

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Mr. Speaker, as the PC critic for education, I want to take this time to remind Ontario that today, when you cast your ballot, remember to vote for your school board trustee. Education is such an important aspect of all of our lives, and I want to stress how important our school board trustees are. I don't want the trustees to be lost in the race. They represent a very significant aspect in our children's lives.

There is a general lack of understanding about what trustees do, given that many decisions on education now come straight from the province. In this election in particular trustees are competing for attention in some very high-profile races. The position sees the lowest voter turnout of all electoral races.

For people who have children in the system, it's important because these are the people who are providing leadership in your schools, helping to focus on school success. They influence how the system responds to

issues and concerns and they are working with individual families trying to solve problems.

I want to remind everyone to get out to vote today, and I want to thank all of the trustees who put their names forward right across our province for these very important positions.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I spent the entire summer, day in and day out, meeting with every community group in my community that wanted to meet. Sometimes it was at my office; other times it was at places where they serve Niagara's most in need.

I toured Project Share's food banks and Nova House women's shelter. I met with our local social assistance workers in their own offices. I did this because in my riding it's clear that there are people who need help.

Niagara has been hit hard by the economic downturn. People, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs. Some of them needed, and still continue to need, a helping hand up. However, what I hear from these community groups was exactly the same: Since 2008, the need has gone up but the funding has gone down.

Shelter beds are full; I've seen it. Our local women's shelter is filled with children and women to its capacity. Food banks are running empty. Transit vouchers are being eliminated. When people have their gas or electricity turned off, they have nowhere to go.

The community groups in my riding are unanimous. Niagara is a large region. We don't want special treatment—only the funding that the region deserves based on its size. Hamilton's population is roughly the same as Niagara's, yet Niagara receives around 20% of the funding that Hamilton does.

I hope the Premier and the government will take the social needs of Niagara into consideration when they implement their budget.

### WOMEN'S CRISIS SERVICES OF WATERLOO REGION

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** In my riding of Cambridge, we have a unique and positive resource for women who have experienced domestic violence or abuse and are taking positive action to improve their lives by leaving their abuser, most often leaving with their children. Of course, the life-changing resource I'm talking about is Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, an incredible organization that significantly impacts the lives of those who need shelter.

Women's Crisis Services operates two residential shelters: Haven House and Anselma House. In September, Haven House officially launched their rebuild project with an edgy "She Deserves It" campaign, which has great support amongst the many partners in the community.

Speaker, these statistics are surprising: Last year, 92 women and 92 children were housed within Haven

House, for a total of 9,989 days of residential care. Without Haven House, these women wouldn't be able to flee abusive and negative relationships, resulting in possible damage to them and their children—physical, psychological, economic and social—which can be catastrophic.

I have pledged to support this rebuild project because it is, quite literally, saving lives and ensuring a future where otherwise there may be none.

I would be remiss if I didn't think thank the hard-working and dedicated staff of Haven House, including the executive director, Mary Zilney, whose tireless efforts are a testament to the kindness that can be found in our wonderful riding of Cambridge.

## CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Ontario's construction industry employs over 400,000 workers, roughly 6.5% of Ontario's total workforce. Construction is also the single largest investor in apprenticeship training. Many of these people are from small and medium-sized businesses and firms. The construction industry is unique in how employees get paid, and delinquent payment in construction is a growing concern.

Trade contractors and subcontractors bear a significant financial risk and are commonly made to wait periods of three to four months for payment after work has been completed. Ninety days is typical, and we even see various levels of government not paying in a timely way.

Delinquent payment strains cash flow, especially for small businesses that still have to meet payroll, taxes, WSIB premiums and other costs. Late payments limit employment growth and ultimately mean fewer jobs for Ontario workers and less investment in new machinery, equipment and technology.

Prompt payment legislation requires that payment be made for all work certified as being completed within 30 days. As a small business owner, prompt payment is something that I strongly support. Quite simply, if you do the work, you should get paid.

Already the majority of US states, the UK, Ireland, the EU, Australia and New Zealand have adopted prompt payment legislation. I'm calling on this government to act now to protect small and medium-sized businesses and those they employ by ensuring prompt payment is required in Ontario's construction industry.

## KYLEE JEWERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Today I want to talk to you about Kylee Jewers. Kylee is five years old. She lives in Lively, in my riding, with her parents, Lee and Josée. Earlier this year, Kylee had a cancerous cyst removed from her back. Then a mass began to develop on her lung. By now she has had four surgeries and has begun chemotherapy.

I'm guessing you know why we call her Super Kylee. All we know is that she has an extremely rare sarcoma that no physician has seen before. Kylee will be receiving

chemotherapy until at least January. She's strong, she's determined, and she's beating this; there's no question about that. It's as simple as that.

The complicated part or the problem, if you wish, is the cost—the cost of travel for treatment from her home in Lively to down here in Toronto, as well as the loss of income as her parents need to take time off work in order to care for Super Kylee. This is an ongoing battle that will be requiring many trips to Toronto for many years to come.

I urge everyone to support this family, and it's as easy as going online. Type [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com) and click on Super Kylee—or she's "es462s." They're hoping to reach \$20,000, and I'm really proud to say that they're more than halfway there. With your support, they will make it.

## BILL DAVIS

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** On Wednesday, October 22, I, together with our Premier, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, had the pleasure of attending an event organized by Peel-Dufferin Catholic Family Services to honour former Premier Bill Davis and his family.

Bill Davis, Brampton's most famous resident, is now 85, but still full of life, humour and optimism. His life, career and legacy can be summed up in one word, statesmanship:

—a minister who oversaw a tremendous expansion of our public education system, including TVOntario;

—a Premier who cared about all, including the marginalized and less fortunate;

—an executive who could make decisions tempered by deep thought and common sense, and who balanced traditions with modernity;

—an Ontarian who worked for national unity;

—and, most importantly, a man who was a good speaker, but a better listener, and the best doer.

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As for myself, I admire Bill's essential decency, humility and, indeed, humanity.

Mr. Davis serves as a role model for the kind of politics that we all need, regardless of one's own political affiliation: the common good of all Ontarians.

## GENDER EQUALITY

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** The United Nations has declared October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

Gender equality is a basic human right as well as the cornerstone of global development. Research shows that investing in girls can impact not only the lives of young girls but also benefits the economic growth and the health and well-being of our communities.

This day is also an opportunity to advocate for girls around the world who face serious challenges in their daily lives, such as hunger, poverty and limited access to education. Girls throughout the world, including here in



Canada, face higher rates of violence, poverty and discrimination. Girls and young women are nearly twice as likely as boys and young men to suffer certain mental health issues such as depression.

By investing in girls, we invest in our future. Equal opportunity for girls is good for all of us.

This year, the International Day of the Girl Child provided an opportunity to recognize those we are inspired by and their important contributions, like Malala Yousafzai. Against incredible odds, she has shown courage and determination in the face of constant threats of violence. The world has taken notice of the incredible power a girl like Malala can have on her country and on the rights of girls around the world. At 17, she is the youngest winner of this year's Nobel Peace Prize and the sixth person ever to receive honorary Canadian citizenship.

On International Day of the Girl Child, we took the time to celebrate girls and young women in our communities and what that means for our future here and around the world.

### TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I rise today in the House to celebrate meaningful progress on transit infrastructure in my riding of Burlington. This week, approximately 70 new parking spaces will be made available at the Aldershot GO train station. As a daily GO Transit commuter, I know how hectic the morning rush can be. No one wants to miss their train because they've had to circle the parking lot looking for a spot to leave their car for the day. These 70 additional parking spaces will help to alleviate congestion and make it easier for commuters from Burlington and the surrounding area to get where they need to go when they need to be there. They will also enhance transportation choice, giving daily commuters a wider range of options beyond their car.

Speaker, infrastructure is the backbone of our economy. This government's commitment to building Ontario up by investing in public transit and transportation infrastructure is critical to easing congestion, improving our quality of life and planning for the needs of future generations.

While these new parking spaces are only a small part of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area transit agenda, they're proof that the plan is already in action and that we're benefiting from the results today.

Over the next 10 years, constituents in Burlington and across the GTHA will see improvements in GO Transit rail service and public transit to ease congestion, support economic development and improve mobility throughout the region. Along the way, I look forward to celebrating many more small but important milestones that, together, all add up to a province on the move.

### SPORTING EVENTS IN ETOBICOKE CENTRE

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Etobicoke Centre is a wonderfully active community, boasting some excellent sporting

facilities and some wonderful organizations that continue to draw some of the world's top athletes to our community.

Just this August, I had the opportunity to join the Etobicoke Lawn Bowling Club at the opening ceremonies of the Canadian National Junior Lawn Bowling Championships. This event, hosted just steps from my constituency office at the Etobicoke Lawn Bowling Club, brought together the best from across Canada and highlighted just one of the fantastic organizations and facilities that we boast within our community.

In September, I joined participants at the annual Terry Fox Run at West Deane Park, where members of the community have applied their love of sport and running to raise money for this fantastic cause, raising over \$1 million towards cancer research to date.

Next summer, Etobicoke will once again welcome the world to our doorstep when the city hosts the 2015 Toronto Pan and Parapan Am Games. During the games, some of the world's top aquatic athletes will prepare for their competitions at the Etobicoke Olympium in the riding of Etobicoke Centre.

One of the best examples of one of those athletes and those swimmers is the Etobicoke Swim Club's Brittany MacLean, the 20-year-old Silverthorn Collegiate Institute graduate who, at the most recent Glasgow games, won two medals and smashed her own Canadian record.

I look forward to welcoming the athletes of the world to Etobicoke Centre next fall, and I congratulate the many organizations and athletes who promote sport, fitness and health within my constituency of Etobicoke Centre.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Durham on a point of order.

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce students from Dr. Emily Stowe Public School in my lovely riding of Durham. Welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I thank all members for their statements.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### ART GALLERY OF GUELPH ACT, 2014

Mr. Arnott moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr6, An Act respecting The Macdonald Stewart Community Art Centre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

## 1807041 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2014

Mr. Fedeli moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr9, An Act to revive 1807041 Ontario Inc.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

## MOTIONS

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding opposition day motion number 1.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I move that opposition day motion number 1, requested by the official opposition, scheduled for Tuesday, October 28, 2014, be rescheduled to Wednesday, October 29, 2014.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it with page Raveen.

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## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

"Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

"Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

"Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

"Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services."

I support this petition and present it to page Faith, from my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, to bring down to the Clerks.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition and give my petitions to page Morgan.

## CHELTENHAM BADLANDS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Heritage Trust"—or the OHT—"holds title to the Cheltenham Badlands, and the Rouge



Trail conservancy” who has managed responsibility “for the site under an agreement with the OHT; and

“Whereas community consultation and engagement is essential” to “the protection of the Cheltenham Badlands and surrounding areas; and

“Whereas local residents should be actively involved in all discussions about the Cheltenham Badlands and related projects in their community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Liberal government fully fund the Cheltenham Badlands management plan, which includes but is not limited to the fencing of the geological feature, viewing platforms, boardwalks, perimeter fencing, trail maintenance and other accessory requirements as part of a complete and approved management plan.”

I affix my name to it and give it to page Jamie.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over northeastern Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government” made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

“Whereas,” since October 2009, “insured PET scans” are performed “in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with” Health Sciences North, “its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through” Health Sciences North, “thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name and ask page Renée to bring it to the Clerk.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** This petition is celebrating Hispanic heritage in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows” for “an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province’s social, economic and multicultural fabric;

“We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and”

we “support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport.”

I enthusiastically support this petition, along with the thousands of Hispanic people in my riding of Kitchener Centre, and I will give it to Félix.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Winchester District Memorial Hospital provides essential health services to the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and was awarded ‘accreditation with exemplary standing’—the highest award by Accreditation Canada earlier this year; and

“Whereas the projected increase in Ontario’s senior population demands that facilities have the resources and capacity required to accommodate increasing demand; and

“Whereas Ontarians cherish access to high-quality local health care; and

“Whereas the recent closure of 14 beds” at the Winchester District Memorial Hospital “and the loss of over nine full-time skilled staff positions at a time when Ontario has experienced unemployment above the national average for over seven consecutive years are the result of ongoing silent funding cuts that are threatening our cherished health care system;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately reinstate adequate funding levels for the Winchester District Memorial Hospital that would allow the reopening of local beds and the rehiring of local qualified front-line health staff.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Raveen.

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

“Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

“(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

“(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

“(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it, and will give it to page Ben to take to the table.

## CREDIT UNIONS

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I will affix my name to it and hand it to page Meher to take it up front.

## PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has eliminated non-hospital physiotherapy service from the Health Insurance Act; and

"Whereas this will drastically reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year for people who are currently eligible for 100 treatments annually; and

"Whereas under the changes scheduled for August 1, the cost of visits under the CCAC (community care access centre) model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather than the current fee of \$12.20 per visit through OHIP physiotherapy providers; and

"Whereas funding for physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes would be cut by almost 50%, from an estimated \$110 million per year to \$58.5 million per year; and

"Whereas the removal of all non-hospital OHIP coverage for physiotherapy services in the community will contribute to a decline in overall health and independence for seniors....

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the delisting of OHIP physiotherapy clinics as of August 1st not proceed and that the provincial government guarantee there will be no reduction in services currently available for seniors, children and youths, people with disabilities and all those who are currently eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy."

I affix my signature.

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## TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas escalating rental costs are making Ontario less affordable and leaving many tenants financially insecure or falling into poverty;

"Whereas tenants living in residential apartments and condominiums built after 1991 are not protected by rent control guidelines;

"Whereas this has created an unfair, two-tier system of tenant protection in Ontario where some tenants have no protection from large and arbitrary increases;

"Whereas fixing this simple loophole in the law will help protect tenants and help make housing more affordable and secure for thousands of Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario act to protect all tenants in Ontario and immediately move to ensure that all Ontario tenants living in buildings, mobile home parks and land-lease communities are covered by the rent control guidelines in the Building Code Act, 1992, and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to affix my signature and give it to Lily-Anne to be delivered to the table.

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** It gives me great pleasure to bring forward a petition on celebrating Hispanic heritage in Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

"Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by" my colleague "MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport."

From a personal standpoint, my husband is Hispanic, so it gives me great pleasure to affix my signature.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for



certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support this and will affix my name and send it with page Callum.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from the people of Hanmer, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Liberal government of Ontario is currently reviewing proposals to sell off a significant amount of our shared public assets such as Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Hydro One, and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO); and

"Whereas our shared public assets provide more affordable hydro, develop environmentally friendly energy, create thousands of good Ontario jobs, and are accountable to all Ontarians; and

"Whereas our shared public assets put money in the public bank account so we can invest in hospitals, roads and schools; and

"Whereas this Liberal government is more interested in helping out wealthy shareholders and investors than they are in the hardworking Ontarians who are building this province; and

"Whereas Ontario is stronger when there is shared prosperity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Stop the selling-off of our shared public assets. Keep our public assets in public hands."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask Jagmeet to bring it to the Clerk.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 18, An Act to

amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government; and

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Thursday, October 30, 2014, from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 18:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the committee's website and Canada NewsWire;

—Witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis;

—Each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members;

—The deadline for written submissions is 3 p.m. on the day of public hearings;

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 1 p.m. on Friday, October 31, 2014; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 3, 2014, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That at 4 p.m. on Monday, November 3, 2014, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, November 4, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question

necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 5.

I recognize the government House leader to lead off the debate.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me to initiate the debate on this particular motion. I'm very pleased to be able to participate in this important debate, and of course, I look forward to hearing from other members of the Legislature as well.

Last June, the people of this province sent our government back to Queen's Park with a strong mandate. They placed their faith in us and our priorities that were outlined during the election campaign. Ontarians were clear that they wanted this Legislature to move past the games and grandstanding of the previous Parliament and get down to work.

I can speak from my own personal experience: I often heard from my constituents, when meeting them at their homes, how concerned they were about the manner in which the House was conducting its business, and the lack of substantive debate and passage of very important policy bills in the House.

During the campaign, we talked about, and the mandate we have received from Ontarians—the people of Ontario are expecting us to take action on helping to strengthen our economy; investing in our modern infrastructure, particularly our transit and transportation infrastructure; and supporting our essential services, while also creating a dynamic business climate for our businesses to succeed across the province.

Our government understands that. That's why we are committed to having a productive session of Parliament. We have an ambitious legislative agenda because that is what we believe the people of Ontario deserve.

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A key part of that agenda is Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. I would like to thank the Minister of Labour for all his work in bringing this bill forward. I know that his ministry has worked closely with all of our labour and business partners to develop the proposed legislation. As a former Minister of Labour, I understand just how important the provisions in this bill are and why we need to move forward with this bill now.

Just to provide some context as to how we got here, Bill 18 was originally introduced on December 4, 2013. At that time, it was numbered Bill 146. It went through several hours of debate in second reading as Bill 146, but like so many other important pieces of legislation in the House in the previous Parliament, it was, unfortunately, stalled.

Bill 18 also includes Bill 165 from the previous Parliament, the Fair Minimum Wage Act. That bill was debated, in fact, for 11 hours in second reading. Some 47 members from all three recognized parties in the House participated in that debate. But again, it was stalled, unfortunately, by the opposition parties.

It is clear we need to move forward with this bill. Bill 18 is based on public reports calling on government to act to better protect vulnerable workers, most notably the reports by the Law Commission of Ontario and the United Way.

Bill 18 protects foreign workers from exploitation, including from being charged usurious fees and having their passports taken away by employers. These individuals should not wait any longer than necessary to benefit from the protections that are offered in this bill. Once passed, Bill 18 will provide workers with information they need about their rights, in their own language, at work. Those workers in need require that information now.

Further, as the CBC and the Toronto Star have both highlighted, changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act are necessary to ensure that unpaid co-op students and other unpaid workers are covered under the occupational health and safety rules. Most importantly, this bill provides vulnerable workers with the right to refuse unsafe work.

Bill 18 will also allow workers and employers to plan for regular minimum wage increases based on the cost of living, and that is the Fair Minimum Wage Act part of Bill 18. Businesses and families need to know this bill has finally passed so they can begin their planning as we move towards indexing or pegging minimum wage to the cost of living, something that both businesses that are looking for predictability in their business operations and workers who are looking to have a fair minimum wage in Ontario very much are looking forward to.

We know, Speaker, that this is extremely important because a lengthy consultation process has already been undertaken by the minimum wage panel, which provided the recommendations that very much make up the essence of Bill 18, including hearing directly from 400 individuals and organizations over a few months. The panel made some very sensible recommendations that are being incorporated in this bill.

Speaker, to provide some background on this type of motion that I've introduced today, time allocation was codified in our standing orders in the early 1990s. This change in the standing orders allowed the government to put forward a debatable motion that would limit the length of debate of government bills and motions and help speed up passage of key legislation. A time allocation motion allows for committee time, where the real work happens in terms of hearing from members of the public, and of course debate on specific provisions through the clause-by-clause exercise. As always, the public will have an opportunity to participate through public hearings and written submissions as a result of this motion, and the opposition parties are welcome to put forward amendments to strengthen the bill as well.



Time allocation is one part of the legislative tool kit that is available and has been used by all three parties in Ontario. In fact, my friend the member from Leeds–Grenville will be very happy to know that from 1999 to 2003, the last Conservative government used time allocations for 60% of its bills—60%. That’s pretty extensive use.

Although it is our government’s preference to allow bills to progress through the normal course, these types of motions are sometimes necessary, especially when there are bills from the last Parliament that Ontarians are counting on us to pass, where we received a very clear direction from Ontarians in the last election that these policies are important for the economic growth and the prosperity of Ontarians. These bills, as I mentioned before—for example, Bill 18—have gone through considerable debate in the previous Parliament and now in this legislative session as well.

The voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June. They did not want any more of the stalling of the Legislature by the opposition parties. I urge all members in the House to support this motion and help pass Bill 18 as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would agree that the government has done a very thorough job in their motion of trampling on democracy, a thorough job of silencing the opposition and a thorough job of preventing the people of Ontario from having their say on a piece of legislation. Unbelievable.

The government House leader talks about, as I heard him say, “Speaker, it is our preference to let things go through the normal course.” This is the first bill since this election happened. Forget about the budget that was passed in July; this is the first bill that the government has actually been tested on their commitment to how we’ve heard, oh, my God, how many times—I can’t count—from the Premier and every one of her minions over there, “Oh, we want this new Parliament to work. We want to work with the opposition. We want to co-operate to give Ontario the best possible government it can have.” Then, at the very first opportunity on a piece of legislation, they shove it down our throats.

And do they ever like to talk. Do they ever like to talk—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to ask the government members to calm down and allow the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to make his remarks.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has the floor.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it a bit strange that they were so quiet while their House leader was speaking—as were our members on this side of the House. We listened respectfully to what he had to say, but now it is our turn to disagree with what he had to say.

Time and time again, they’ve talked about working together. They had a little test before this bill. It’s called estimates committee. They want to yammer on about the election. The election is over, and nobody ever brought up this bill during the election, I say to the Minister of Labour who is sitting there, smiling like the Cheshire cat. Hey, nobody ever brought up Bill 18, or whatever its previous incarnation was, during the election; nobody brought it up once.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You can call it whatever kind of cat you want. My wife calls it the Cheshire cat, and I’m with her on this one.

I’ll tell you, they should be embarrassed that they’re going to try to ram this thing through at this time. But I digress, because this wasn’t the first test. The first test has been going on over the last few weeks. It’s called estimates committee. Oh, yes. We all heard about MaRS. I suppose you’re going to say that the people had their chance to vote on MaRS and that the public is in favour of you people sinking \$308 million into that white elephant. I suppose you have got a mandate on that, too. You people look so embarrassed every time MaRS comes up. You’d like to get up on a spaceship and fly there and get the heck out of here because you’re embarrassed. It’s a joke.

1350

Speaker, the House leader talks about how this is still going to committee. Did he read his own motion? The committee that this is being sent to—that process is a joke. That is a joke. Even if committee doesn’t pass the bill, it will just be deemed to have passed. It comes back to the House—they are basically telling us when it will be voted on, and we know how it will be voted on, because they have the majority.

They like to go back into the past, and they like to talk about what happened in previous governments. But you know what is a funny thing about when somebody gets into government? They believe that everything that was done wrong in a previous government is okay now for them to do because the other guys did it wrong. So we can do it wrong, too, and that makes it right. That’s quite the thinking over there.

You didn’t believe in time allocation—you didn’t believe in it when you were sitting over on this side in opposition—but all of a sudden, now that you’ve got the keys to the liquor cabinet over there, you’re all going to be high on some kind of whisky and thinking you can just run roughshod over the rest of this House. Shame on you. This will come back to haunt you someday down the road.

Let’s get back to the genesis of this. The House leader met with our House leader and said, “We would like four bills to get passage through this House.” My House leader said, “We’re going to take that back to our caucus. We’re going to talk about it.” We came back and said, “You know what? We can work on this.” One of them is—well, they added a fifth. Of course, they are always changing their minds, like they did last Thursday on

private members' business. I haven't had a chance to talk to the whip about that yet.

They wanted Bills 10, 15, 18 and X.

**Interjection:** X?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They wanted Bill X. They haven't even tabled it yet, but they want it.

We were willing to work with that, because it's a bill that I was actually the critic on in the past Parliament. It was Bill 34 then: the security bill for courts and court security and nuclear plants. We were quite happy to work with that. It was a good bill. We made a lot of amendments. My friend from Scarborough—Agincourt—we were on that committee. We made a lot of good amendments to that bill, and we were happy with it. So we were prepared to put that one through. But, you see, my House leader then speaks to the government House leader—these are in-the-hallway meetings; we're just having chats—and he says, "Well, you know, Yasir, there are a couple of things"—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They're having a conversation, and he says, "Yasir," and Yasir says, "Yes, Steve?" And Steve says, "Well"—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, the member, having served for some 11 years, is aware that members are referred to by their title, by their riding name or by their ministry, but not by their first name.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member is quite right. The normal convention, of course, is that we try to refer to each other by our riding names or ministerial names, but clearly, he was quoting from a conversation, or at least paraphrasing from a conversation.

Again, I return to the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to make his remarks.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, the member from Mississauga probably wasn't going to have a chance to speak to this motion, so he wanted to get his five cents in. Anyway, good for him.

But, anyway—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, this one is a point of order. Standing order 23(h) prohibits the member from making an allegation or imputing motive to another member.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I don't find that there is a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Perhaps we can get him to zip it—for a few minutes, anyway.

Back to where I was. So they're having a conversation in the hall, and my House leader says, "Look, we're prepared to work on those bills, but on Bill 10 and Bill 15"—

**Interjection:** Bill 21.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Sorry; Bill 21. We're asking for Bill 15 and Bill 21. We're asking for public hearings elsewhere in the province, because Bill 15, for example, talks about how they meshed the insurance bill with the old towing bill. There are a lot of tow companies in rural Ontario that are very, very concerned about some of the provisions in the bill. You can't force them to come down to Toronto for an afternoon hearing, a few hours of hearings, to get five minutes to make their case. Five minutes—that's less time than it took the House leader to read the stupid motion. Think about it. They want those people to drive down from rural Ontario to Toronto to make their case in five minutes. What would have been wrong with going up to rural Ontario and having those hearings?

They talk about other governments. Well, I'll say this for Dalton McGuinty—can I use his name? Oh, yes, he's not here anymore. I'll say this for Dalton McGuinty: I don't agree with a lot of the things he did, but in the first Parliaments that he had here, they were majorities too, and we travelled on those committees because he at least accepted that the view of people across this province was pertinent and relevant. But now we're in a new era. We're in the Kathleen Wynne regime.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Again, if you could refer to her as the Premier, that would be more appropriate.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Sorry, we're in the Wynne regime. Just as they say "the Harris regime, the Davis regime"—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It would still be more appropriate if you would refer to her as the Premier.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** This is the Wynne regime and all things have changed. Now, all of a sudden, democracy is out the window. The first opportunity you have over there—we've asked for hearings on two bills. We've made it clear: We are not going to hold these things up unnecessarily. We asked for hearings on two bills—not just the two bills, but think about the gas plants committee, where we've asked for the opportunity to speak to two witnesses—Laura Miller and Peter Faist. Laura Miller and Peter Faist would bring something to the gas plant hearings that no one else can do.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Standing order 23(b)(i) states specifically that the member must address the question at hand, none of which pertains to the subject of his last few remarks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I think the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is talking about the motion, but I would ask him to bring the point that he just made back to the motion as well.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It is about the motion. Also, this motion speaks to the tenor of this Parliament. It speaks to the view of the governing party. It speaks to



how they see opposition working with them. It speaks to how they see themselves working with opposition. The gas plant committee is an illustration of what has brought this on. We should have seen it coming, maybe, because Laura Miller and Peter Faist are two key witnesses in a criminal investigation being conducted by the OPP.

The Premier of Ontario, Premier Kathleen Wynne, had a great opportunity to put that baby to rest, to close the book by saying, “Yes, we’ll bring in those two witnesses.” By the way, Laura Miller and Peter Faist agreed to testify before the committee. They were not going to have to be dragged here in shackles. They were prepared to speak to the committee—two people left.

You also have to remember that when the hearings were going on, after the OPP filed their information to obtain, a whole new series of questions was raised, questions that even Peter Wallace, then the secretary of cabinet—he even voiced concerns about what was revealed in the ITO. Now Peter Wallace is nowhere to be found. All of a sudden, he’s not there anymore. Was he forced out the door or did he retire? Who will ever know? Who silenced Peter Wallace? Who silenced Peter Wallace?

**1400**

So this is what we asked. We asked for the government to give us two witnesses: Laura Miller and Peter Faist. We could have closed that committee down forever, allowed it to write its report and put that issue to rest. But without them, Laura Miller and Peter Faist—they are the ones who know about deleting emails. They are the ones who know about the destruction of public documents. They are the ones who know about unauthorized access to the office of the Premier of Ontario. They are the ones who—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, can the member opposite speak to the motion before us, Bill 18? Because right now he’s digressing somewhere and talking about the gas plants. I mean, this doesn’t even make sense, Mr. Speaker. He has not spoken about Bill 18, which we’re debating on this discussion, so can he focus on the motion, please?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Again, I find that the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is speaking to the motion, but I would ask him, obviously, to bring it back to the actual text, the wording of the motion.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, absolutely, Speaker. What we have to remind ourselves from time to time is that when you’re speaking to a time allocation motion, you’re not speaking to a bill; you are speaking to the practice of the government. You’re speaking to what they believe is their right to run roughshod, willy-nilly, over the rest of Parliament. That’s what a time allocation is. A time allocation isn’t about free and fair debate; it’s about, “This is the way we’re going to shut down debate. This is the tool we’re going to use to stifle debate and to silence the opposition duly elected in this province.”

So when I speak about Laura Miller and Peter Faist, it isn’t about Bill 18; I freely admit that. It is about the practice of this government and its unwillingness to hear the other side. They forget about the owls and the eagles. They forget about them when they get on that side. That’s when they put on the blinders and the earplugs. Blinders and earplugs are standard issue in the Liberal caucus office. That’s why, if they would simply do those things, they would actually do themselves a favour.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I hear from the member from Trinity—Spadina. He has awoken from his slumber. That’s the gentleman who said at the estimates committee that he believes that transparency and accountability is very good, but only at the right time.

So my point about Laura Miller and Peter Faist is that if you don’t allow them to testify before the committee, you can never, ever say that the committee’s work was complete. You cannot say the committee’s work was complete.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Mr. Speaker, let’s try this a different way. The member is in fact in contravention of standing order 23(e), which involves the anticipation of any matter already on the Orders and Notices paper for consideration. The member’s resolution is on the Orders and Notices paper for Wednesday afternoon, and the member is in fact not debating either a time allocation or the bill that is itself being time-allocated, but is in fact debating an opposition day motion that has not yet been called.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Once again, I’ll ask the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to confine his remarks to the wording of the motion before the House.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, if a government decides that it is going to operate in this fashion, it denies the people the full story. It denies the people, in fact, access to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth—cornerstones of what makes this country so great.

In the case of Laura Miller and Peter Faist, if they’re not allowed to testify, it would be like a murder trial being shut down before the two eyewitnesses have come to testify, because they are the principal witnesses in that criminal investigation and this government has decided they will not testify.

I’m moving on now to—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I’m going to have to ask you: How does that relate back to the text of the motion?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, an interesting question, and I appreciate the opportunity to answer that, Speaker. It is a very good question. That is, repeated in a different way, the practice of this government. It has the opportunity, in the Laura Miller and Peter Faist case, to show that they truly believe in getting the whole story out.

It's the same idea here: If we were to allow hearings on some of these bills across the province, we would allow the whole story to get out. We would allow the people who are most significantly affected by the legislation that this government is proposing—we would give them the opportunity to speak and offer their disagreement, or their constructive suggestions as to how that legislation might be made better.

I've got a tremendous amount of respect for the other 106 people who sit in this House, but we don't have a monopoly on right. We don't know everything; we don't understand everything. There are smarter people than us out there. Why wouldn't we give them the opportunity to let us know what they feel, how they feel, about a piece of legislation? This is a province of 13 million people—talented, wonderful people. Why not give us, as parliamentarians, the opportunity to hear what they have to say? Why not give us the advantage of being able to extract some of their knowledge, and input that into our legislation to make it better? No. This government and their House leader say, "Well, we need about five minutes of your time, and we'll move on."

You see, they've already decided what they're going to do. This is just the minimum that they could possibly do and get away with legally, under the terms of our standing orders in the House. This is the bare minimum, to get away with it.

Unfortunately, it appears that that's exactly what this government intends to do. For the next four years, we will sit here, doing our best to defend the best interests of the people of Ontario, but at the end of the day, it looks like they'll get away with it. Shame on them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Before I begin my remarks, it's going to be a tough job being the follow-up for an opening act like that.

I'd like to start with a few things, talking about this time allocation motion here, a few things that I think we could all agree on, Mr. Speaker: All 107 members of this House work hard for our constituents. I believe all of us, in one way or another, were elected because our constituents believed that we could speak for them, that we would speak for them. They believed that. I think we can all agree. Let's start with something we can all agree on, Mr. Speaker.

I've been here for two and a half years, and it's an interesting place. All the people that I've dealt with in this House—I have respect for them all, and they all have the same goal. And up until today, and up until this motion, I believe we did all have the same goal, because we all had the ability to stand here and give the views of our constituents, the views of our stakeholders, whether we agreed or disagreed; we'd give their view. We all had that ability up until this motion. I understand this line has been crossed many times.

1410

We hear about the election, and yes, the Liberals won more seats than the others, granted, but that doesn't mean

that the other side shouldn't have a right to speak. That's what this time allocation motion is doing: It's giving only certain people a right to speak.

What we find most egregious about this—we're not against this bill. We aren't against this bill. We weren't trying to slow this bill down. One of my colleagues, later, will have remarks specifically to the bill. We weren't trying to slow this bill down. We don't understand why you need the hammer. I understand time allocation. I don't agree with it, but I understand how a government, in extreme situations when the opposition is actually trying to stall—but in this case, this is pure impatience or just lack of regard, and not only lack of regard for the members in this House—because that's not the people I'm really worried about; it's lack of regard for the constituents.

If you take this bill as an example—I believe it's Bill 18. There are portions of this bill that are very good. Some are not so good. It's meant to make stronger workplaces. It's to protect people in precarious jobs. That's a good idea. But you know what's really not good? Not only are you reducing debate here—I remember one time I'd spoken on this bill, and we have privileges here; I can stand up today and I can speak on this bill. My colleagues can't, because you're shutting the time off—but because of this time allocation motion, you're only holding one day of hearings here. If you were serious about protecting people in precarious workplaces, perhaps it would have been a good idea to have a couple of days of hearings in places where those people actually live and work. That's the idea of making government more accessible to people, because in here, it's not accessible to most people. Someone who is involved right now in precarious work or is fighting to get a year's back wages—someone who is fighting for that, if they're somewhere in the reaches of my riding or in Algoma-Manitoulin or anywhere outside of downtown Toronto, how are they going to get to Toronto to tell their story? No thought was given to that. The only thought was given to making it work for the governing party. Good legislation should work for the people. That's a big, big problem.

This bill is also two bills put together, with two different issues. Both are issues, actually, once again, that our caucus doesn't oppose. We don't oppose either. But it's not to say, "Well, we've had all this debate." No, we haven't had that debate on this bill.

If you look closely at this bill, if you look where the minister may order a specified date by which a review under subsection—that's for the minimum wage. So after this time allocation, that will never come to this House again. That's also a problem.

It's very quiet now, everybody, so I guess I'm not having the same impact as my friend Mr. Yakabuski.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** That's actually a good thing.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It depends, but it is—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** John, you're actually talking sense.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** One of the members of the government party said I was talking sense, and that's because



I disagree with his party, because I really believe—and we really believe—that members should have the ability to speak to a bill. Should members have the ability to block continuously? I don't know if we should have that ability—but to say, “Bang! Six and a half hours. We have heard enough?”

And then, if you look further in the motion, “The committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, November 4, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House.” Basically, it doesn't really matter. For those people who do come to the committee, it doesn't really matter.

So here you've got legislation that's supposed to protect people, and you're not even really trying to make an effort as a government to be open and—we've heard this time and time again—to be transparent. Well, part of the issue about being transparent as a government is to actually open yourself up and go out to the people.

They're going to say, “Oh, but we won the election,” and you did win the election. But they didn't win the election on this bill. If you're serious about people in precarious jobs, people who are fighting for back wages—if you were serious about that, you would have made an attempt to go where those people are, to go—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** This bill is about minimum wage and precarious employment, and that's really, really an issue.

Time allocation—en français, on dit qu'ils ont imposé le bâillon. That's a gag, and that's what this is. “Time allocation” sounds like it's time management, or it's speeding things up. That's not what it is. Time allocation is picking a few people who can speak, and then basically one side makes the decision and they move on.

I am sure that that is not what the people of Ontario expected, when they heard the Premier talk about transparency, on the first bill of this session. I'm sure they weren't expecting a gag order on the first bill of the session, a bill that at least everyone in our caucus was perfectly willing to work with. We have never said that we didn't support this bill.

So, why? I guess the question that comes from us to the government is, “Why?” When you publicly say you want democracy to work, why don't you let it work? Really, why don't you let it work? It's difficult to understand.

What makes a government believe that only they have the best ideas? We've heard it several times. Several times I've heard it. I heard it today, that this was “the best government we've ever had.” Really?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Really? Again, the best governments, if you look through history—I wasn't here when Mr. McGuinty was Premier, but it did sound to me as if he did go out to the people after, and talk to them on individual bills—talk to stakeholders on individual bills.

In this case, talk to people who are fighting for their wages. Talk to people who have to raise a family on

minimum wage. That's what government should be doing, and that's not—that's not—that this government is doing.

1420

I think we've all learned things from our parents, and I learned a few things from my father. We would go to auctions. I'm a farmer by trade, and we would go to auctions. I was a little boy and my dad was showing me things and he said, “The most powerful people in the room don't show their power.” The people who were bidding like this weren't the people who were controlling the auction; it's the people who bid with a wink. But they don't display their power.

He told me that honest people don't have to tell you they're honest. He told me that if someone has to tell you that they're honest, beware. I think if my dad were still alive today, he would say the same thing about people who keep having to call themselves transparent. A truly transparent government doesn't have to talk about being transparent. A government that truly believes in democracy—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Practises it.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** —practises it. Thank you. And that's very, very important.

Maybe it hits harder for people who live a long way away from this glorious place we call Queen's Park, but I remember I subbed in for the committee on social policy, I believe it was. It was the LHINs review. We ended up in a town—Vankleek Hill, I think. It was close to your riding, Steve. I remember those people were a bit shocked that the government was in Vankleek Hill, but it made a big impression on those people that government actually came to their part of the world and let them present. That is how to show that you truly care about people. It's not about, “Here, we're going to debate this for six hours; then we're having this. And whether this committee comes up with anything or not, we don't care.” That's what they are saying: “We don't care. It's going to pass.”

The government has the power to pass this bill, but it also should have the prerogative to actually listen to the people who are impacted by this bill.

Today we had a question to the Minister of Transportation about a road condition in northern Ontario. Again, it's a long way away. Last Thursday, we had a discussion on making a committee to look at roads. I'm going to roads because this is why democracy in a big province like this has to reach out farther. You can't just make the rules here. I'm elected to represent my constituents, but again, if government came closer to my constituents and to other people's constituents, we would make better decisions, better policies.

The reason I'll give, an example of why government cannot be central, as this motion is doing: We talked last Thursday about reducing gridlock around the province. In that session, I spoke about how there is a big sign, like when I come down the 400 onto the 401, it says, “401 express lanes moving slowly”—that sign. We have one outside of my house, six and a half hours from here, and

they changed it, Mr. Speaker; they changed it this week. What that sign says now is, "Give motorcycles ample space." It was snowing when I went to work here.

Once again, that decision was made. Whoever changed that sign did not change it in northern Ontario, because we don't have many motorcycles in northern Ontario right now. We have a few, but not a lot. July has great weather for motorcycles, but not October.

It would be the same as if the signs for Temiskaming Shores were changed, or the signs for Toronto were changed to Temiskaming Shores, because then that sign, when you come off the 400 onto the 401, instead of saying, "401 east, moving slowly," would say, "Watch out for moose."

That's what people have to understand: This province isn't just here. This province is a microcosm of different people, different places, and it's great because of that. But to be truly great, we have to work on governing it like that.

There are huge parts of the province that feel incredibly ignored. Motions like this, that say, "If you want to speak on this bill—we really want public participation, but you have to come to Toronto for your five minutes. By the way"—if you read the motion closely—"we don't care what you say anyway."

Read it closely. That's what it says, and that's a problem.

We are in favour of the bill. We are strongly opposed to this motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to be able to speak to this time allocation motion, although I have to admit that I'm a bit surprised. I'm the opposition House leader. I think I'm someone who can get along with the other two parties. I just don't understand why the government requires this motion on Bill 18, but I'll respect the government's right, under our standing order 47, to be able to table it.

I first want to say something about a member's statement that the member for Mississauga—Brampton South made today. She made a very nice statement about former Premier Bill Davis. One of the quotes she said in her member's statement was that Premier Davis was "a good speaker, but a better listener."

I think, from what I see today in this motion and a similar motion that I understand will be debated tomorrow, I can't say the same thing about Premier Wynne. Again, one of the things you have to do as a government, is you can't say one thing and do something else. Over and over again, since we came back to this House, you can look at it completely—in the speech from the throne, the government is saying one thing, in terms of a throne speech, yet their government does something completely different on the floor of this House. I'm going to give you some examples.

The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke did talk about how we handle these bills. I had a meeting last Monday with the government House leader. Essentially,

he gave me four bills he'd like to fast-track, and he was very specific. We'll have a couple of hours of debate; we'll go in and have some public hearings; we'll bring the bills back, have a short debate for third reading and pass them. He gave me a list of four.

On my word, Speaker, I went back to my caucus and tabled that. On Thursday, at our normally scheduled House leaders' meeting, between the government House leader and the House leader for the third party, I reported exactly what I promised to do. I took it to my caucus.

There were two bills that they requested that we have some hearings on. One was in regard to—and Ms. Elliott is here, our critic for health—the blood plasma bill, the two bills that were put together to make Bill 21. There are some questions about the blood supply, how we deal with plasma. There were a lot of questions. I know members have received emails. We wanted to have some hearings so that people in eastern Ontario could be heard and so that people in southwestern and northern Ontario could be heard.

Out of four bills, to have two bills—Bill 21 and also Bill 15—have hearings outside of this place, I thought, as the opposition House leader, was fair. I had no issues with the other two bills. Then, as the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke said, there was a fifth bill added to the mix on Thursday.

**1430**

To deal with something like Bill 21—that's a very, very substantive issue in the province—I didn't think that asking the people in eastern, southwestern and northern Ontario, in addition to having our regular public hearings in Toronto, was such a big deal. Obviously, I was wrong. I didn't believe that having a bill that had some specific concerns with tow truck operators, which was amalgamated in the insurance bill—that having public hearings was a problem. But you know what? I misunderstood.

The other thing I think I misunderstood, Speaker—and I read the throne speech again today. There were some words in the throne speech: "Your government will lead from the activist centre." They also had a heading in the throne speech called "Building from the Activist Centre."

I think I got that wrong. When the Premier used those words, I thought she was the activist and I thought, because of how we use the terms left, right and centre when we refer to right-wing policy or left-wing policy or centrist policy—I felt that when the Premier used the words "activist centre," they meant that she was going to govern from the centre. But I was wrong. We've got facilities all over this province. We have one that the Toronto Maple Leafs play hockey in, called the Air Canada Centre. I know what the activist centre is. The Legislative Assembly, our building, has been renamed the "activist centre," because we're going to make activists from eastern Ontario, southwestern Ontario, northern Ontario and all across this province come here to the activist centre to give us their feedback. We're not going to go to them; we're going to make them come to us. So I got that wrong, Speaker.

I was wrong when the Premier talked about being an activist. She's not the activist; we're going to haul every-



body in here who has a problem with any government policy and we're going to force them into a one-day hearing. That's the way these guys are going to govern, and I don't think it's right. I don't think it's right. Again, it's saying one thing and doing something completely different when we come to the Legislative Assembly. I just believe, when you read the rhetoric in the throne speech, that it doesn't make any sense.

One of the pages—I'll read you the quote. This is from your own throne speech: "It will not invite your questions only after decisions are taken, but as decisions are made. Your government will put evidence before ideology and choose partnership over partisanship." That's what they say. The government House leader says, "Steve, what do you think? Do you think we can fast-track some of these four bills?" "Sure, we can fast-track a couple. In the spirit of partnership over partisanship, let's have a few hearings for a few bills that Ontarians actually want to talk us to about." Tow truck drivers have an issue with that provision in Bill 15. They want to talk to us. There is a whole host of Ontarians who want to come and be heard on Bill 21. To me, Speaker, when I use the words—and I do use them from time to time, "partnership over partisanship"—that's what I mean. I don't mean that you're going to come here in a four-hour, five-hour or six-hour period, get your five minutes before a committee and we're going to ram a bill down your throat the next sitting day of the Legislature. To me, that's not partnership over partisanship.

I also believe that there are a number of words here where, again, the government says one thing and does something different. The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke spoke very passionately about the two witnesses, Peter Faist and Laura Miller, who had agreed on May 8 to appear before the justice committee. The words they used in their throne speech were, "We're going to let the committee write its report." Most Ontarians felt, "Okay, they're going to continue the process and people are going to get to the bottom of it."

This is, just for the record, the subject of an OPP investigation. So you would think that a government that wanted to be open and transparent, that made people believe they were going to be activist, would allow two people who had already agreed to testify to come before the committee.

We've seen, with this motion today—and regardless of what happens on Wednesday, I think we're going to again have the government say one thing and do something different when it comes to voting and when it comes to speaking.

To use in the throne speech words like "your government will implement its plans in the same manner they were developed—openly and transparently"—that, to me, is probably one of the most laughable comments from this government—and to have motions put forward at estimates regarding the MaRS deal and then to have the government members vote against them.

The member for Trinity-Spadina—I heard him very vocally respond to the member. The quote that I have in

front of me says, "I support openness and transparency, but at the right timing." I don't agree with the member from Trinity-Spadina. The right time is right now. This is the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We have a duty to Ontarians to give them a forum where we can get to the bottom of some of their decisions. That's part of our Westminster system of government, the opposition holding the government to account. That's what we do. But when I have motions—I had to look at these again. I can't believe, for the life of me, that they would say one thing and then do something else.

I'm just going to read a couple of the motions from estimates. One of the motions was simply: "I move that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure provide the Standing Committee on Estimates within two weeks a copy of the MaRS mortgage agreement." The government voted against it.

Another motion: "Chair, I move that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure provide the Standing Committee on Estimates within two weeks a copy of the Ernst & Young report on MaRS." The government voted against it.

"I move for the committee to consider the following motion: that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure provide the Standing Committee on Estimates within two weeks a copy of the MaRS business plan which supported the \$234-million mortgage." The government voted against it.

There's three motions; I've got more. I've got more where, again, the government says it's going to be open and transparent and then the government members do something completely opposite.

It's the same as the words in the throne speech: the "activist centre." They're not being activist. They're not allowing people to be heard.

I believe we're being fair and reasonable. For me to say, out of four, now five, bills, to allow two or three quick passage—at least two—and have some minor hearings, which would take four or five days, to me that's reasonable. That's allowing the government—I'll read their words again—to "invite ... questions," to "put evidence before ideology" and to have "partnership over partisanship." Meeting the government halfway on having committee hearings for two bills and allowing two to pass quickly, to me, is partnership over partisanship.

Allowing bills that we've debated in the House—and the government House leader, I feel, bent the truth a bit. With this bill that's before us to be time-allocated, Bill 18, we've had four—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I withdraw. I can continue. Correct?

We had four members of 28 who spoke on Bill 18 before it was time-allocated—four members; one in seven. I believe, from speaking to the government House leader, that at one meeting I indicated we had maybe a couple more speakers that wanted to get things on the record.

We just went through an election, as the government likes to remind us with every question of question period, but we did have people in the small business community—I know in my riding—indicate that they would have liked to have an opportunity to put some things on the record. I already did, before the election. There were a number of letters that I read into the record, comments from my local chamber and a number of other members.

But again, we went through this process. We all had, I would guess, a chamber of commerce all-candidates meeting, so there were some small business people there. This is Small Business Month, so we do get a lot of feedback from the business community. It would have been nice to have a reasonable amount of debate to finish up Bill 18 to be able to have it go in, have some committee time and bring it back.

The government decides that the closed fist of the government is going to be applied to the chin of the opposition party on this bill and the bill tomorrow. And probably, although the government House leader says he doesn't have a plan next week, I'm assuming that there will be more closure motions and more bills—standing order 47 being invoked on the small list that he's given me.

Let's face it; we've all read the media. We know that the 24 or 28 bills, depending on how you're counting them, are going to come back here. I would expect that this government, again, time after time after time, will be putting their fist to the chin of the opposition and the public by using this order and closing debate.

1440

You know what? I want to make sure that I give you another quote from your own throne speech. This is a very important quote, so I hope you're all listening over there, because when the Lieutenant Governor said it, it made me think about times like we're seeing today and tomorrow. It says, "Your government knows that trust is hard-earned, but easily lost. And so it will work each and every day to keep your trust by meeting its commitments to you." I suggest—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** That was June 12.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** No, no, no, it wasn't June 12. It was July for the throne speech. On days like today, you need to think, Minister, about that statement, and you need to think about those people who, tomorrow, when we debate that bill, will be looking for a vehicle to express their feelings about you amalgamating those two bills so that people in eastern Ontario who wanted their voices to be heard, who wanted to keep their trust in you, will be silenced. Those people in southwestern Ontario who had the trust to support you in June—some of them will lose their trust in you because of motions like this today and losing their opportunity to come in this—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** You can quote all the polls you want, Minister, with all due respect, but do you know what? Trust is easily lost. You need to make sure that when you carry on a government, you have that balance and you deal with people openly, honestly and with

respect, whether it's here in the chamber or here in a committee hearing or out in the other community.

I agree with the previous speaker from the NDP about going to small communities for hearings. I had a constituent call me over the last couple of weeks and thank me for a local issue I brought up at the social policy committee in Kingston. I drove from Brockville to Kingston for the sole purpose of making sure that one of those local concerns was put on the committee agenda so that the committee and the members of the public who were there knew. I had a very nice thank-you note the other day that—the LHIN took that local issue that I brought up at the social policy committee and made that change. When the chair of the South East LHIN, Donna Segal, met with me in my office, I thanked her. I thanked her for listening to that submission and making sure that item was dealt with. That's the type of thing you get when you listen to people, when you go and actually have standing committees that go into local communities. I didn't ask for a lot, Speaker: having one hearing in eastern Ontario, one in southwestern Ontario, one in northern Ontario and a couple of days in Toronto. Five days for a province our size, I suggest, was fair and reasonable.

Regardless of standing order 47 and the fact that the government can—and regardless of the history that members on the other side want to speak about, this is all about fairness, and this all sets the tone in the first real month of Parliament. We sat for three weeks in the summer. We sat last week. We're now in our fifth week of sitting since the new Parliament was elected. We're dealing with two motions on two consecutive days, one on a bill that I think we all agree could move fairly fast, that being Bill 18, and one tomorrow that we felt, with just a little bit of opportunity for the public to address some concerns, we could get this Parliament working.

As the House leader of the opposition, motions like this, to me, are something that I don't think are necessary. I think a motion like this wasn't warranted, given the amount of co-operation that I pledged to the House leader last Monday and on Thursday. I think this is a dangerous road we're going down that we don't need to. Again, for a government that, numerous times in their document, says that they want to be open and accountable and they want to be transparent—there are so many words in the throne speech that pledge the same thing over and over again, but again, it's one thing to put it in print; it's another thing to put it into practice. This is my concern with this government time after time after time.

Listen to the member for Mississauga-Brampton South when she refers to Bill Davis as a good speaker and a better listener. You folks on that side need to be a better listener. Having these types of bills on the floor of the Legislature this early, when we've already pledged co-operation, is the wrong way to go.

Thank you, Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It's an honour to rise in this place to speak on behalf of the people I represent in London



West, although I have to say that I'm a little bit concerned about the circumstances in which I'm joining this debate. I thought we were going to be having a discussion on Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act; as the member from Leeds-Grenville just pointed out, I'm one of those members who actually has something to say about this legislation, and I want to get some of my concerns on the record.

Instead, now today we're talking about time allocation on this bill, and I hope that my remarks will demonstrate the importance of allowing debate, of listening to what members have to say and listening to the people of the province about the concerns that we have heard from our constituents.

As the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane said very clearly, our caucus supports this legislation. There is no doubt that we recognize that strong workplaces are the absolute foundation for a strong economy, and we absolutely need a robust legislative and regulatory framework so that we can protect worker health and safety, so that we can provide fair compensation for employees, and most of all so that we can prevent the exploitation of vulnerable workers, who are often, as we know, young people and immigrants.

Bill 18 is what is known as an omnibus bill, which again makes the need for debate an even greater priority, because it makes changes to many different pieces of existing legislation that are all related to employment and labour. Today I'm going to spend most of the time that I have left addressing what is, to me, one of the most important changes that is proposed in this bill, and that is around the amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that will protect unpaid workers and students in particular.

As the NDP critic for training, colleges and universities, as MPP for a city that includes two of Canada's finest post-secondary institutions—Western University and Fanshawe College—and as a former school board trustee, I have a special interest in making sure that students who are engaged in work placements as part of their program of study are protected in the workplace.

To give you a sense of the importance of this amendment, I want to take a moment to provide an overview of the legislative protections that are currently in place for these post-secondary and secondary students. At the post-secondary level, students fall into four categories, depending on whether their work placement is paid or unpaid, and whether their work placement is optional or a mandatory requirement for graduation.

Students whose placements are paid and mandatory receive the same protections as most Ontario workers. They're covered by the legislative protections of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which means that they have the right to refuse unsafe work, the right to participate in resolving health and safety concerns, and the right to know about any hazards to which they may be exposed in the workplace. They are also protected from reprisals if they exercise their rights. These students also receive WSIB coverage from the Ministry of

Training, Colleges and Universities, which means that they are insured if a workplace accident or injury occurs during their work placement.

Students whose placements are paid but optional are also covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but they are not covered by WSIB.

Students whose placements are unpaid and mandatory are not covered by occupational health and safety but are covered by WSIB.

Finally, students whose placements are unpaid and optional are not protected by anything; they are not covered by either occupational health and safety, nor are they covered by WSIB.

At the secondary level, students are not normally paid, so they're not covered by occupational health and safety. However, the Ministry of Education either provides WSIB coverage directly or requires employers to provide WSIB.

#### 1450

You can see from all of these different variations that there's a real patchwork quilt out there of protections for young people who are doing work experience as part of their program of study. There's a real hodgepodge of health and safety protections for students. That's why our party is so supportive of the change proposed in Bill 18 to change the definition of "worker" in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Currently, in order to be a worker under the act, you must be paid. Bill 18 amends the act to include people who are performing work but are not being compensated, such as the students I just described, as well as unpaid interns whose internship is not connected to an educational institution. This amendment is long overdue and is obviously critical to protect the safety of young people in our workplaces.

We know that in Ontario, within the last 10 months, three students have died while participating in work experience programs offered through their educational institutions. Just last month, 17-year-old Adam Keunen was tragically killed in an accident while on an unpaid high school co-op placement. Adam was in grade 12 at Beamsville District Secondary School and dreamed of becoming a welder. He had not even finished his first week on co-op placement when he was crushed under a front-end loader. The investigation is still ongoing, so it's not clear whether coverage under the Occupational Health and Safety Act could have prevented Adam's death, but it's telling, however, that the investigation is being led by the Niagara Regional Police Service because the Ministry of Labour does not have jurisdiction over occupational health and safety issues related to unpaid work.

Last December, we learned of the death of Wayne Affleck, a 27-year-old St. Clair College student from Leamington who was studying to be an apprentice electrician. Wayne was found without vital signs in the electrical room of the solar farm he was working at.

Earlier this year, just this past April, we learned of the death of Aaron Murray, a 21-year-old student at Loyalist

College who was working on an unpaid practicum as a security guard at Trent University. Aaron was also juggling a day job as a manager at a local McDonald's and was on his way home from an overnight placement shift when he crashed his car just before dawn.

The circumstances of Aaron's tragic death show the kinds of pressures young people are under to build a life for themselves and gain decent work. He was expected to work for free as part of his program while holding down a part-time job just to get by.

As I said earlier, there's no question that the amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act proposed in Bill 18 are critical to protect young people, but what's missing from Bill 18 is any recognition of the absence of WSIB for post-secondary students who are doing optional work placements.

What is also missing is any reference to the basic workplace protections that all Ontarians have a right to expect for secondary school students and post-secondary students, because whether they are paid or unpaid, whether their placement is mandatory or optional, any student who is involved in a college, university or secondary school work placement is completely exempt from any of the protections of the Employment Standards Act. That means they have no entitlement to reasonable hours of work. They have no entitlement to breaks, no entitlement to leaves of absence. New Democrats see this as a glaring omission from this legislation, which is why I introduced my private member's bill, Greater Protection for Interns and Vulnerable Workers, earlier in July. We believe that everyone who is involved in a workplace in Ontario deserves basic protections available under the Employment Standards Act, and that applies in particular to those young people who are being exploited as unpaid interns.

Currently, there are six very specific and narrow conditions under which employers can legitimately claim exemption from their obligations under the Employment Standards Act and bring in trainees without paying them. There is no provision under the act to allow employers to bring in interns to do the work of paid employees and not compensate them. Yet employers continue to openly flout the act and actively recruit for unpaid interns. All it takes is a couple of minutes on Craigslist, Kijiji or any other job search website, and you will find numerous postings for unpaid workers. I have a few that I'd like to share here.

Here's a posting for a digital video intern in Toronto: "This is a great opportunity for students to gain working experience in the ... industry.

"This is an unpaid internship. We will gladly provide a letter of recommendation for candidates that complete their assigned responsibilities professionally and successfully."

Or here's a sales and marketing internship that was posted on Craigslist earlier this month: "This is an unpaid position with ample opportunities to learn and be mentored by the VP of business development."

Here's a posting for a digital host internship. It says, "This is a useful and more importantly, fun opportunity to apply hands-on skills for a music start-up. This internship is unpaid, but is definitely perfect for personal and career development!"

Here's one for an accounting and marketing unpaid internship: "You can learn lots with this start-up and exciting promising operation."

Here's a public relations promotions coordinator. It says, "This position is not paid; however, a stipend to offset the expenses will be provided."

At a time when youth unemployment is double the provincial average and good jobs are few and far between, it's easy to understand why young people agree to take unpaid positions, why they are so desperate for relevant work experience and so anxious to get their foot in the door that they feel they have no other choice than to work for free. New Democrats believe that young people who are doing the work of paid employees deserve to be paid.

When the Minister of Labour spoke to Bill 18 last week, he talked about the employment standards enforcement blitz his ministry had conducted over the spring and early summer. The blitz involved inspections of 57 GTA firms in industries that are known to hire unpaid interns. Of the 31 firms that had interns, 42%—almost half—were found to be in violation of the Employment Standards Act. That is a staggering number of employers. From our perspective, it shows that the existing provisions of the act are not doing the job; they are not protecting young people from being exploited. While it's great that the ministry is finally taking steps to enforce the legal criteria for unpaid internships, enforcement blitzes can only scratch the surface.

Enforcement that is complaint-driven depends on young people being aware of their rights under the Employment Standards Act, but we know that that is usually not the case. Unpaid interns who do understand their rights may be unwilling to lodge a complaint because of fear of repercussions, fear of getting a bad reference or, even worse, fear of being blacklisted from the industry they are trying to enter.

I come to this place from a background as a researcher, and I do appreciate the data that was shared by the ministry as a result of their enforcement blitz, but I'm frustrated by the lack of data about the extent of unpaid internships across Ontario. We have estimates in Canada saying that as many as 300,000 unpaid interns are working in this country, but we have no way of knowing how widespread the practice really is, no way of tracking how many young people are being asked to work in Ontario, often illegally, without compensation.

That's why my private member's bill requires employers not just to post a poster in the workplace, but also to meet with interns before the internship begins to review interns' rights under the Employment Standards Act and to provide written notice to the ministry about conditions of work, length of employment, job description, hours of work and whether the act applies. We believe that a much



more proactive approach on the part of the ministry is needed to educate and raise awareness among both employers and interns about the rights of interns in Ontario workplaces.

What's also missing from Bill 18 is an anonymous reporting mechanism to allow third-party complaints about contraventions of the Employment Standards Act, which is essential if we are truly committed to protecting vulnerable workers and is also included in my private member's bill.

#### 1500

In addition to changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, in addition to fixing the gap in WSIB coverage, in addition to cracking down on unpaid internships by amending the Employment Standards Act, New Democrats also believe that greater oversight is required for post-secondary programs that involve students in work experiences, which are also known as work-integrated learning programs, and that greater effort is needed to make these experiences paid.

That's why I will be reintroducing the private member's bill I introduced last session, the Learning Through Workplace Experience Act, to increase the number of paid work opportunities for students, to make sure that students have high-quality learning experiences and that they are not simply brought into a workplace in order to displace paid employees.

Before I close, I want to briefly address some of the other provisions included in Bill 18, because there is so much in that legislation that we need to discuss.

The act includes measures to index minimum wage to the rate of inflation and sets up a process for reviewing the minimum wage every five years. This is an important provision because minimum wage rates are one of the tools governments can use to reduce poverty and close some of the wage gaps between women and men, between racialized workers and non-racialized workers.

However, the effectiveness of minimum wage rates as a policy tool in reducing poverty depends on where the rate is set. Simply tying the minimum wage to the cost of living will not, on its own, raise low-waged workers out of poverty if the rate is not set high enough in the first place. That is why New Democrats argued for a \$12-an-hour minimum wage before indexing sets in, instead of the \$11 that has been set by the Liberals. It's why we are concerned that this bill gives the minister alone the authority to review the amount every five years without coming back to the Legislature.

Another important provision of Bill 18 deals with the regulation of temp agencies. We know that temporary work is increasing dramatically in Ontario and across Canada. We also know that temp agency workers earn an average of 40% less than their co-workers who are hired directly by a company. They often receive few or no benefits, have much less access to on-the-job training, and have little protection against employment violations or termination.

Bill 18 creates new record-keeping responsibilities for temp agencies to track and record hours worked by a temp worker and to retain those records for three years.

It also introduces the concept of joint and several liability in the case of temp agency employees, which will make temp agencies and the client company jointly responsible for paying workers' unpaid wages. This makes sense because, from the perspective of the temp worker, what is most important is that they get paid. Who pays is not the issue. In practice, this important law means that employers who use temp agencies will have to make clear arrangements as to who is going to be responsible for compliance with the Employment Standards Act.

Bill 18 also amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to clarify responsibilities for temp workers who are injured during the placement. It will attribute costs to the employer where the injury occurs and will assess wages with reference to the income of the agencies.

While these are important measures and will certainly address some of the injustices experienced by temp workers, who are often taken advantage of because of their precarious work situation, New Democrats believe that these provisions do not go far enough, and we need to have public hearings so that we can hear from people who work with temp workers about some of the other policy solutions that could be put in place to really provide meaningful protection for temp workers.

Another important section of the bill deals with recruitment fees for migrant workers. We know that migrant workers are often forced to pay recruiters tens of thousands of dollars in fees, leaving many with no choice but to borrow money in order to find employment in Ontario. Currently, under the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, recruitment fees are prohibited for live-in caregivers. Under Bill 18, this prohibition will be extended to all migrant workers.

Certainly, the NDP supports this provision. However, we also believe that stronger action could have been taken. For example, the effectiveness of the proposed ban on recruitment fees will be limited because it relies on employee complaints rather than proactive enforcement.

The final section of the act I'd like to address concerns provisions designed to reduce wage theft. This is an obvious and much-needed improvement. A recent Workers' Action Centre survey found that one in three workers in low-wage precarious jobs experienced wage theft over the last five years. Even interns, even those who are paid, are often vulnerable to wage theft because they do not know their rights under the Employment Standards Act or are fearful of reporting their employer and jeopardizing their future employment. The two main sections in Bill 18 that will help reduce wage theft are the extended damages provisions, new information disclosure requirements for the Employment Standards Act, new rules for employer self-audits under the ESA, and a prohibition on tip-outs.

Overall, as has been stated by other members of my caucus who have spoken to this bill, the New Democrats support this legislation. We want to see it move ahead, but we do have some substantive concerns about gaps in the legislation that could be addressed. We need to hear

from Ontarians. We need to hear from people who are going to be affected by this legislation, so that we can make the provisions of the bill stronger, so that we can better protect vulnerable workers and so that we can strengthen Ontario workplaces.

I look forward to hearing the input that is provided on Thursday, during the public hearings, and to improving the legislation before it comes back to this House for third reading. Thank you very much for your time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those who are opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I have received from the chief government whip a deferral notice asking that the vote be deferred until tomorrow, Tuesday, October 28, at the time of deferred votes.

*Vote deferred.*

#### FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 23, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When we last debated Bill 15, it's my understanding that the member for Mississauga—Streetsville had the floor. I return to the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** How coincidental. I had a number of calls waiting for me on Friday from some of my constituents who actually wanted to ask about this, to ask what is the state of this thing. It allows me to address my constituents' concerns today and to inform them that I'm going to be sending each and every one a copy of Bill 15 and they can see exactly what's in it.

Just as a quick recap, among the many other things that Bill 15 does, it enables the province to be able to take some very specific action, and, more importantly, to work with the insurance industry to get at some of the systemic causes of fraud, those things that are simply

tacked onto your insurance premiums and, not only that, but are marked up before you pay for them in the form of higher insurance premiums.

This particular act, Bill 15, is one that I hope is going to get speedy passage through the House, get a good look at in committee—because this is the kind of statute that is a bit of a game changer, so that's one that we want committees to take either a first or a second look at—and bring it back to the House, get it debated, get it passed and continue to keep our insurance premiums coming down. They are down about 6% over the last year. I will say, in fairness, I didn't notice mine come down, and I looked very carefully. So I want to see these measures enacted and I want to see my insurance premiums come down the 15%, on average, that the province has pledged.

1510

With that, I am pleased to say that I'd like to wrap up my remarks and take questions and comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I appreciate the government whip's, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, comments. It's interesting that he's going to send a copy of the bill to all of his constituents, but tomorrow morning we'll be debating yet another closure motion by the government to suppress debate by his constituents. They'll only be allowed one day of hearings for that government motion. I understand from our staff that we will be right back here, just like we were a few moments ago on Bill 18, to discuss this Bill 15.

Again, I appreciate the member's very eloquent comments, but there are some Ontarians who would like to have further debate on this bill. Again, Speaker, I speak through you directly to the member in hopes, in his capacity as the chief government whip for this government, that he will use whatever power is at his disposal to try to influence the government not to close debate on this bill.

I think he is in a great position as the government whip to try to listen to Ontarians, especially on the towing provisions of this bill. We've got tow truck operators, people in that business from all across Ontario who want to have debates close to their home. These are small business men and women who can't take a lot of time off to come to Toronto for a one-day hearing. I really hope that he will listen to me and some of my colleagues and allow hearings in the east, in the southwest, in the north, and also here in the city of Toronto.

I look forward to his response and his final two minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to take off from where the member from Leeds—Grenville was. I was actually in the House listening to the comments he had brought to the floor in the debate on the closure motion, which the government has proposed. I say it myself: It's very difficult for people from Algoma—Manitoulin to travel and get to the airport—if they can afford the airport—and get down to Toronto. So closing down debate, making



sure their voices are not being heard, is something very problematic and difficult for me to accept from this government, particularly—on a lot of their campaign promises—they were going to be open and transparent.

I pride myself from where I sit that I've developed my partnerships; I firmly believe in that. I'm going to be continuing to work on developing my partnerships, but what this government has chosen to do today is going against everything that, at least, since I've been here since 2011—it is not the direction that we should be going in.

I would hope that going forward we're going to be seeing some changes. I am not particularly encouraged, as far as from where I sit in the backbenches, as to the demeanour and some of the comments and some of the actions that are coming in from the members opposite. I'm hoping that will change.

I just want to get back to the bill here: Bill 15, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. One of the biggest issues that we have with this bill is, if it does go through, there is going to be a reduction. Right now insurance companies are required to pay a 5% interest rate for pain and suffering for individuals. That is an incentive in order to get them to resolve some of the insurance fraud and some of the matters that are before the courts. If that is significantly reduced to what is proposed—I think it's down to the 1.3%—you're removing that incentive in order to get individuals to the table and having those discussions.

I'm looking forward to having a lot of debate on this particular bill and many more to come.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I did hear the comments from my colleague from Mississauga—Streetsville. I have to reflect on the Streetsville part of his riding, as it's very interesting and historical because that's where, of course, Hazel McCallion, the great mayor of Mississauga, actually started her political career a long time ago as the deputy reeve of Streetsville, and that morphed into Mississauga. We know that the wonderful grand dame of municipal politics will be leaving today, effectively, with the election of a new mayor in Mississauga.

You know, the comments made by my colleague on Bill 15 are right on. I just want to reflect for a moment. Let's talk about Darling Insurance in Peterborough, founded many years ago by Norm Blodgett. Norm was the chair of the IPM in Peterborough in 2006. The company has expanded under his son, Peter, who is the president and CEO. Peter's brother Scott works with the Ministry of Finance here at Queen's Park.

Even though I'm not a customer of Darling Insurance—I deal with Ted Topping in Peterborough—I do know, when I talk to Peter, the kind of quality service that he provides in the auto insurance sector to the great customers in Peterborough and beyond. I do know that to every customer who comes in, he gives the best deal possible. He sits down with them, he looks through their insurance requirements and he gives them the kind of rate

for their auto insurance and their house insurance and their boat insurance and every other insurance that you want from Darling—the right price at the right time with the right coverage for those individuals who are getting that.

That's what this bill is all about: giving the consumers in Ontario a fair shake, Topping Insurance a fair shake and Darling Insurance a fair shake. That's the kind of legislation we need to bring in the province of Ontario. We do know, when you look at your auto renewal notice from Topping Insurance or Darling Insurance, that those companies are responding to the market and giving those deep discounts to the consumers in Peterborough.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** The member from Peterborough is eloquently speaking about Darling Insurance. They're not only in Peterborough; they have many branches in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. I just thought I'd put that in as a reminder.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Anyway, what we're discussing here is the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. We're just tidying up that, speaking from the Liberal side of the House. I know that we're going to do an hour leadoff by our very competent member from Nipissing, who—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Fedeli financial services: You can't beat it.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** You can't find a person who knows more about finance than the member from Nipissing. You'll be getting the book over there shortly.

I think that the Liberals—this bill, insurance and fraud, we all tie this together. They've had many studies done. I've been in committees where they talked about insurance and fighting fraud. Really, we need some action out there to help the insurance companies lower their rates. Huge fraud rings, mostly around the GTA, just put their roots further, they get more in depth in the communities if you don't nip them in the bud, if I can say it—if you don't get on top of it. So I say we need more tools to fight insurance fraud so all our premiums come down and people can be treated fairly across the province.

I do want to mention, from tow truck drivers, certainly in my area—there are parts of the bill that penalize the good-acting, good tow truck companies that I have in my area. They should not be penalized under this bill. They need an opportunity to voice their concerns. What we just debated was the time allocation motion on another bill that limits debate on this and limits the opportunity for people, especially in rural Ontario—again, not having their voices heard by the Liberal government here in Toronto. That's very unfair. I know the member from Nipissing is going to speak further, but we're asking for that to be stopped.

Thank you. I see the chief whip is going up over there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the questions and comments. I return to the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock was welcome to go on, but it was just the Speaker stepping in with his heavy hand to just shut down debate with the questions and comments.

To my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, I share his concern about the towing provisions. This is a bill that is finally going to make this a level playing field so that we don't penalize the good actors. I think we're on the right page here.

To my colleague from Algoma–Manitoulin: You've noted the out-of-town deputations. Now, as my colleague knows, out-of-town deputations are frequently done by teleconference or video conference. That's important for people who want to comment on this bill, because we definitely want to hear them. In fact, we have, in my time, sometimes flown upwards of 15 or so members and legislative staff to a location in Ontario where our entire hearing day consisted of just a few deputations. So anyone that wants to make a deputation—if you're in the north, if you're in rural Ontario, if you're in the east or if you're anywhere where a deputation isn't occurring, you can still apply to make a deputation to the committee. You can either make it by teleconference from your home, on your telephone, you can use Skype and you can get yourself connected in, or we'll arrange for you to go to another place where you can sit down in front of a camera and give your deputation.

1520

To my colleague from Peterborough, I really want to thank him for his words of wisdom. He talked about Darlington and Topping Insurance. You know, those are the type of plainspoken folks who would buy you a cup of coffee at the East City Coffee Shop in Peterborough.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Lunch, even.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** They'd even buy you lunch? I'll make sure that we tell them that.

I do want to thank my colleagues from the various parties for their contributions to this debate and for their suggestions regarding the remarks that I made over the last two sessions. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The member for Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I want you all to settle down for an hour. This will be an exciting, scintillating hour on insurance for you.

**Interjection:** Only an hour, Vic?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Only an hour today, I want you to know.

Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 15 for an hour this afternoon. This bill is a continuation of a century-long drama when it comes to auto insurance in Ontario.

It seems from time to time that auto insurance becomes a trendy concern and we come out with some legislation. That has resulted in lots of bureaucracy and lots of legislation, piled one on top of another. It's making the system too complicated and, in the end, very

costly. In fact, we now have the highest auto insurance rates in our country.

That brings to mind some of the other times I've stood in this Legislature and said, "We have the highest." It reminds me that we have the highest payroll taxes in all of this nation, as well as the highest auto insurance rates. We also have the highest energy rates in all of North America, and very sadly, on Saturday, the rates will go up yet again, to over 14 cents. We're now going to have a solid lock on the highest energy rates in all of North America.

But we're here to talk about insurance today, so it's important to note that we've heard from stakeholders, including advocates for accident victims, who have concerns about this bill. There are concerns around the aspects of this legislation related to changes affecting the towing industry. I'm going to speak at length about that at the end, in perhaps the last 10 or 15 minutes. I think it's important to listen to those concerns and see if there are improvements that we can make to this bill in committee to address each and every one of them.

This bill essentially merges Bills 171 and 189 from our previous Parliament. It addresses five priority areas relating to auto insurance in Ontario. The Liberals are touting this bill as part of their cost-reduction strategy, intended to help deliver 15% in savings to Ontario drivers, which we all know has been a failure.

Overall, I will say that this bill is indeed a small step forward. There are, unfortunately, few significant cost savings that will be achieved from the bill, but on the whole it is supported by the insurance industry, because they consider it a step in the right direction. The trial lawyers support most of it, but have issues with amendments to the pre-judgment interest rates. The medical and rehabilitation community is primarily concerned with the additional bureaucracy of the licensing requirements.

Bill 15 will move the entire dispute resolution system to the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Licence Appeal Tribunal. The implications of this move are, first, moving dispute administrative costs from industry-funded FSCO to taxpayer-funded Ministry of the Attorney General. So there's no overall reduction, but less pressure on auto insurance costs. That's only a shell game. We're robbing Peter to pay Paul. We've done that, sadly, in the last 11 years. We've seen that in many other sectors, but in this particular case, taking the costs from one and giving it to another, the costs did not disappear; just who pays for them has changed. So there's no pressure downward on auto insurance rates from that.

Mediation services will still conceivably remain an issue. We recommend having the option for a claimant and insurer to use private mediators. This gives claimants more choice and allows them to avoid long queues in the publicly administered mediation process.

This bill also doesn't address the issue of why so many cases go to dispute in the first place. Our party has recommended using existing medical assessment guidelines to have truly independent third-party assessments. That's what we feel we should be doing, and this would



make injury classifications more black and white, and eliminate the need for mediation in some cases.

There are amendments that we have and that others will have, and let me suggest a proposed amendment right here and now: that we remove the part of the bill that mandates that all cases with a no-fault component be heard before a tribunal only. Doing so will allow claimants with both a no-fault and a tort case to pursue the matter as one, and will not lead to the cost and confusion of having to pursue them separately. This is not magic. This is just a good, solid proposed amendment to this bill.

Let me talk about the prejudgment interest charges. Prejudgment interest refers to the interest charges on the expenses incurred during the period of a dispute. Currently, as you heard earlier, the interest on pain and suffering is fixed at 5%. That is, if a claimant has claimed pain and suffering and gets a favourable court ruling, the insurer has to pay the amount with 5% interest. Bill 171 proposes tying this interest rate to the market rate. Interest rates for out-of-pocket expenses incurred during a court proceeding are already tied to the market rate. This is something that we support. That's the kind of move that we are interested in supporting.

There's also a lot of debate about licences for service providers. Bill 15 proposes issuing licences for health care providers that provide services to auto accident victims. This aspect is meant to deal with fraudulent practices of certain health clinics, particularly in the GTA, that will overbill insurers or will bill for unperformed services.

The issue of health clinics was addressed in the anti-fraud task force's report, which was released in November 2012; we're coming up now to its second anniversary. We supported implementation of the recommendations of this report, but sadly, so far the Liberal government has only addressed four of the 38 recommendations. That's over the past 23 months.

We also have a proposed amendment in this area: Scrap the licensing regime that is currently in the bill and instead require that all health clinics appoint a designated manager—having a designated manager will be a requirement in order to bill insurers through the HCAI system; and, in the event of possible fraudulent billing practices, require FSCO to report to the designated manager of the respective health college.

1530

It sounds a little complicated, but it's a very simple amendment that will be implemented into this licensing regime.

Then we also can talk about the licensing of insurance agents and adjusters. This section of the bill provides some clarity regarding licences for insurance agents and adjusters. This section of the bill can best be described as housekeeping. We support this section.

Fraud remains a key driver of upward cost pressure on auto insurance rates. It's unclear—absolutely unclear, actually—if this legislation, as is, will achieve the government's 15% rate reduction goal, especially given the fact

that the government has failed miserably in meeting its 8% interim reduction target. This government's talk about results is simply that, Speaker: It's only talk. There has been no definitive action on achieving this 8% number.

Our party has advocated a comprehensive plan to bring down auto insurance premiums for everyone, and we will continue to propose amendments, including on this bill, regarding prejudgment interest and dispute resolution, which will improve the legislation. We've said from the very beginning that the NDP demand for a 15% auto insurance premium reduction would have unintended and negative consequences.

I have spoken in this Legislature before. State Farm, a company that held 11% of the auto insurance market in Ontario, has picked up and left Canada, citing the Ontario auto insurance market as the primary reason. This is what we mean by “unintended consequences.” For every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction and, in this case, a company with 11% of our province's business is gone from Ontario and, indeed, gone from Canada.

We have a historical example we could have learned. New Jersey promised to cut rates by 15% back in 1998. Numerous companies there left the market at that time, making auto insurance very difficult to obtain. It's the law of unintended consequences. You don't want that to happen, but if you don't plan it through, that's what happens.

While rates in New Jersey did indeed come down 15% over two years, the lack of availability, choice, and competition then led to a 27% spike in premiums two years later. Again, this is the law of unintended consequences. That's what happens when you don't understand all of the consequences that could arise from these various actions that you take.

Further, we've started to hear from various constituency offices that people with a few blemishes on their record are being dropped by their insurance carriers. Insurance carriers cannot drop a client during their policy, but can refuse to renew a policy. More and more drivers are being dropped by their insurance carriers as they try to rid their books of even the most moderate of risks.

If insurance becomes more scarce, it will not only leave people frustrated and without coverage, but it will also lead to major increases in premiums. That's the law of supply and demand. New Jersey was the best example. We just need to look to the past to understand what will happen in the future. A 15% reduction caused companies to leave, caused supply to shrink; demand goes up; prices go up 27% in New Jersey. That is simple economics, Speaker.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I thought Governor Chris Christie would have—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Yes, you can read, Minister, all about it in the Fedeli Focus on Finance. Look for that plug. Thank you.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I just want to know if it's a bear market or a bull market—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I can consult with you at a later date on the state of Canadian—specifically, on Ontario

markets. But I can tell you, with our highest hydro rates in all of North America, we know what happens to companies in Ontario.

When the Auditor General released, at that time, his annual report in 2011, the independent evidence supported what we are hearing in a scathing report. It seems that we use that language around here an awful lot: "scathing report." Speaker, it's because there are a tremendous amount of scathing reports. But in that particular scathing report, the Auditor General noted that not only was the regulator, FSCO, not meeting its legislative customer service standards, but, Speaker, it wasn't even close.

As set out in the Insurance Act, mediation is supposed to be completed within 60 days—period. That's set out in the act, Speaker. So if someone gets in an accident and feels their insurance company is shortchanging them, they can initiate a dispute. The first step of that dispute is to take part in a FSCO-administered mediation process. It is the hope of this process that the insurer and the claimant can agree on some type of mutually agreeable settlement in order to avoid going to the courts or to a FSCO-administered arbitration.

This initial process is supposed to be completed within 60 days. That is what is set out in the act. What the Auditor General noted in 2011 is that, due to the substantial demand for mediation services, FSCO had only 5% compliance of that timeline. Some 95% of the cases were not being resolved in the 60 days, the timeline that was set out in the act. In fact, most applications at the time were being dealt with not in 60 days, but within 10 to 12 months after the initial filings.

This had led, Speaker, to a backlog of more than 36,000 cases here in Ontario. That's just the backlog. That is a real problem that requires practical solutions from our government. But is anybody here talking about that? No, Speaker. Only our party, only the Progressive Conservatives, talk about it and continue to bring this very issue up in the Legislature. Speaker, time after time after time we continue to talk about the act not being met. The auditor brought it up in 2011, and still we have this ongoing backlog.

Finally, after months of this, the Liberals did agree to review the dispute resolution process. They appointed Justice Cunningham to review the system and provide recommendations. Moving the dispute resolution system out of FSCO's hands and into the Licence Appeal Tribunal in the Ministry of the Attorney General is per the recommendations of Justice Cunningham and something, quite frankly, Speaker, we really don't object to.

You're noticing a bit of a trend here. There are many things in this bill that we do not object to. But, Speaker, there are a tremendous amount of aspects of this bill that will require some serious work, and we are going to continue to provide recommendations when it comes to committee, including amendments.

However, if Bill 15 is aimed at reducing costs so the government can deliver on the premium reductions they've promised, we're nowhere near there yet, Speaker. Quite frankly, we're not even halfway there.

#### 1540

It's worth noting that the insurance regulator, FSCO, is industry-financed, so moving any administrative function out of FSCO will reduce that cost to the industry that they have to pay to FSCO. Therefore, it is conceivable that premiums could come down slightly because of that. However, costs are not reduced at all. Again, we've robbed Peter to pay Paul. Now, rather than paying for the dispute resolution system through their auto insurance premium, Ontarians will pay for it through new taxes.

If the goal of the bill is to reduce costs, this is nothing more than a shell game. I mentioned that earlier. It doesn't reduce your costs. It will perhaps slightly reduce your insurance rate, but your taxes will go up to pay for this new administration that's going to be handled now, for the first time, by the Ministry of the Attorney General. The costs haven't gone away. That's why I—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Shifted.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Yes, the costs have been shifted from this pocket over to this pocket. That's all that has happened here, Speaker.

Another area that I think this bill falls short on is the role of the private mediation services. Back when FSCO was experiencing its highest backlog of mediation cases, they contracted for a private mediation service to help clear the backlog. They've done it before to help out, so why isn't this an alternative? This is a short-term alternative. We've previously recommended to open up the system to private mediations. Providing choice and expediting the mediation process has cost-saving implications. Speaker, when something takes 10 to 12 months to do instead of 60 days, that adds costs. There are inherent costs that are built in.

One thing I'm also concerned about is eliminating the option to pursue a dispute in court following a mediation. As it stands now, once a dispute moves through the mediation stage without resolution, even after the 10 or 12 months that it takes, the claimant and the insurer will get together with respective legal counsel and decide whether to take the case to an arbitrator or to the courts. While a number of disputes that arise are strictly no-fault and would be best served by going through an arbitrator, some cases have both a no-fault and a tort component. Removing this option therefore has a number of implications. There are four:

(1) It removes the inherent fairness of allowing a local judge to decide in a dispute—simple.

(2) It removes the right to sue for extracontractual damages, leaving such issues strictly in the purview of a tribunal not authorized to deal with the equities of the situation.

(3) It causes more rather than less costs by forcing insurers and claimants to fight battles on two fronts rather than one front on every case. That adds costs.

(4) Ultimately, it will reduce rather than enhance opportunities to access justice.

So there are flaws with that.

I'm hoping, of course, that our amendments and our recommendations will be listened to. Again, there's a lot



about this bill we like, but there are certain areas that not only are not going to help reduce costs for the ratepayer, taxpayer, insurance payer, but there are some that will actually increase costs, which defeats the whole purpose of bringing this bill forward in the first place.

Speaker, now I'd like to touch on a previous suggestion that our party has made to improve the auto insurance system in Ontario. The first is to encourage competition and reduce excess bureaucracy. We'd like to adopt a file-and-use rate-setting process. I'm going to take moment or so to explain what I mean by that, Speaker, but this file-and-use rate-setting process will allow companies to lower prices quicker. That's what we're after here.

So we're bringing a suggestion that actually will lower prices quicker. It will ensure greater market competitiveness and encourage a wider range of discount offerings for Ontario drivers. Isn't that what we want this bill to be all about? The file-and-use system would allow technology to enter our marketplace quicker. This file-and-use system would be of great benefit to seniors and also new drivers in our province, whether they be young or new immigrants who have gotten driver licences, so that we can get a true, accurate measure of how they're performing.

Right now, I'll explain the file-and-use system. The current system of filing and waiting for a response from FSCO to go ahead with a rate increase inhibits the ability to use technology at its fullest. Right now, the insurance companies must file and wait for a response from FSCO; we've already heard from the Auditor General a narrative on responses from FSCO, from a 60-day to a 10-month or a 12-month waiting for one of their areas of mediation.

The insurance company, whether they're going to raise or lower their rates, has to create a report. These reports are thousands of pages long. They have to include all of their supporting math and their stats, including the actuarial science that was used to prove why their rate request is a plus or a negative. So they file and wait. They file, they advance all of their supporting documents and they wait. Whether it's a rate increase or a rate reduction, Speaker, this is the method.

Now, when you file and wait, it can somehow take between nine months to a year to get a rate change in this province. Even a rate reduction, when they file, can take that long to go through FSCO. So if you want to be competitive and you want to bring lower rates for your customers, under the current system it can take an insurance company well over a year to actually become competitive and lower their rates. Isn't that what this bill is supposed to be all about? Yet we continue to have these impediments in the way to lower rates.

So what our party is suggesting is that you have a file-and-use system, which would allow industry and auto insurers to compete. We could have seen State Farm remain in the marketplace here. We might even see Progressive come into our marketplace here in Ontario. We watch their commercials every day. We see Flo. We can't have access to that—

**Interjection:** What about Grey Power?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Some of us would qualify for Grey Power.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Many of us actually would qualify for Grey Power.

Speaker, we would likely have more insurers competing for our marketplace. We all know that "more" means competition, and competition is what brings lower rates in Ontario. That's what we want to see in our province: competition.

**1550**

So far, the things that we're seeing are hurting competition, sending companies like State Farm away and keeping companies like Progressive out, because we're not up on the latest technology. We don't have a file-and-use rate process while FSCO goes through the math and the actuarial statistics that have been presented. We want to see more competition. That's how you lower rates in Ontario. It's time-proven and time-tested, and that's what we want to see here.

I'll shift over to the dispute resolution process. In the event of a claims dispute, our party wants to allow people to opt for private mediations. This will reduce wait-times and costs associated with waiting for the government-appointed mediator. It will happen quicker, and when it happens quicker, the costs are lower. When the costs are lower, your rates will come down. There are some fundamental, core principles and values that can be brought into this insurance sector to reduce costs. I've outlined several of them, and I'm truly hoping, as we bring forward these recommendations, many in the form of amendments, that what we've talked about today for the last half hour at least will actually be listened to, because these are the very items that will actually help the government achieve this 15% reduction that they're looking for—not in an artificial way, not in a shell-game way, not in a way that is going to hurt the companies and cause them to leave, but in a way that will actually, truly reduce their costs. When their costs are lowered, rates can come down. This isn't just forcing the rates down arbitrarily, as in New Jersey, and watching them spring up again by 27% in two years, as happened in the past.

I'm speaking, again, about the dispute resolution process. People will either come to an agreement sooner, or it will be off to the courts or off to an arbitrator quicker, so that they can get somebody to get their agreement in place with the insurers sooner. The sooner it can be treated, the sooner they'll get healthier and the sooner they'll get back to work and get back to their normal lives. So this doesn't just have cost consequences; this has human consequences as well. By getting to these mediators quicker than waiting eight, 10 or 12 months, this will help them in their lives. This transcends costs.

Unfortunately, some disputes last so long that a temporary injury, because they're not getting the necessary treatment, can become a permanent injury, and then that adds even further costs to the system. It's harmful to them, and it's costly to the system. So we are proposing some simple changes that will fix a lot of what ails not

only our troubled industry, but the people who have been involved in an accident.

We also want to establish a truly independent peer-reviewed medical assessment system. We want standardized assessment procedures that require multiple assessments performed by medical professionals. By doing so, this is another use of FSCO.

We have talked, as a party, for quite some years now about combatting fraud. The government has indicated movement on a special fraud unit. Despite previously discounting our idea, the government has decided that they've realized, probably for the first time, that we really do need to deal with fraud. This is a big, big, big segment of our insurance.

I want to congratulate our member from—one moment, Speaker, as I think about what his full riding name is—Elgin—Middlesex—London. I want to thank him. I want to thank our member Jeff Yurek for his spectacular work over the last several years as our critic. He has been right since day one, and I am pleased to see that the Liberal government is finally addressing this issue of fraud.

We believe that we need to establish a special unit of the crown attorney office to investigate and prosecute fraud, period. So, government, now we agree with you on the fraud unit. There's no hesitation there. Thank you, by the way.

Speaker, on this segment, before I get into the lengthy segment on the towing industry, we need increased accountability. This is my last chapter on this. We need a fair, well-functioning marketplace for auto insurance. I think we agree on that. We want to make sure the senior insurer executives are personally and financially liable for the conduct of the company.

I think what has happened over the years is, there's no trust anymore between the companies and the people paying the premiums. There is some way that we need to re-establish that trust, and one of these ways is to make the senior executives accountable.

I'd like to touch now on the towing aspects of this legislation. I'm going to talk a little bit about that, and then I'm going to spend a considerable amount of time on very specific amendments for the towing chapter.

By and large, towing companies, garages and storage yards provide efficient, reputable, top-notch service to the people of Ontario. However, a minority have been reported to have been taking advantage of consumers.

I think that happens in every sector. I think it's inappropriate to punish the good guys in the towing industry with unnecessary warrantless entry and suffocating overregulation—that this bill will provide—accreditation, licensing and training, to tackle fraud and organized crime in the tow truck, storage and auto repair industry.

The safety of motorists, tow truck operators and other roadside assistance workers is a concern and a focus of our member from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, whose “slow down, move over” legislation was introduced three years ago. It was a wonderful focus, and I'm so pleased that our member has brought that forward.

Consumer Protection Act changes for the towing and storage providers section of the act deal with several issues. There are nine of them:

- disclosure of information to consumers;
- requirements that tow and storage services provided to consumers be authorized;
- deviating from estimated payment amounts;
- the provision of itemized invoices;
- insurance requirements;
- publication of rates;
- a tow and storage consumers bill of rights;
- requirements that consumers be allowed to remove personal property from towed or stowed vehicles; and, the ninth section,
- the establishment of qualifications for tow and storage providers.

There are approximately 1,200 tow truck and vehicle storage operators in Ontario and approximately 3,000 tow truck drivers. Most of them provide excellent service to their customers and contribute to keeping our roads free and clear by removing vehicles, including those involved in collisions. They do that quickly and efficiently. Anybody who has been involved in an accident would know that these men and women are experts in their fields.

#### 1600

However, some in the business do not meet the standards that are indeed expected of them. Some tow truck drivers charge exorbitant rates, leaving vulnerable accident victims feeling surprised and distressed at a time when they already are deeply distressed. Customers have reported having their vehicles towed to far-off storage facilities to increase mileage, thus raising prices. That's part of the fraud that we speak of. People report going to pick up their vehicle from vehicle storage lots, only to find they've been asked to pay unexpectedly large amounts before their vehicles are released. That's the unscrupulous aspect that we spoke of, Speaker, which also adds to the costs.

Again, this is why we believe addressing fraud is one of the major areas we can address to reduce rates. Some towing operators are involved in fraud rings that infiltrate auto insurance claims by steering claimants to a particular auto body storage and repair shop, or health care clinic, or legal service provider. This is what is happening, on a limited scale, but it's causing your insurance rates to continue to rise.

The Highway Traffic Act would be amended to remove the current exemption for tow trucks under MTO's commercial vehicle operator's registration system, the CVOR system. The proposed legislation would allow the ministry to set qualifications and standards governing the operation and use of tow trucks, including driver certification and training requirements, and prescribe penalties to the violators.

On March 2, 2011, Garfield Dunlop, our MPP from Simcoe North, introduced his private member's bill, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, commonly called the Roadside Assistance Vehicles Act of 2011. Including tow



truck operators in the “slow down, move over” legislation will recognize the dangers these men and women face, and will help prevent crashes on Ontario highways. It will reduce injuries and save lives.

Speaker, I want to talk about the storage and lien reforms. This part of the act requires body shops and tow truck operators to give notice of vehicles in their possession to the owner of the vehicle in a reasonable time-frame, particularly when the storer has reason to believe that the vehicle in their possession was received from a person other than the owner of the said vehicle. Again, all of this is meant to cut down on fraud and treat consumers more fairly when it comes to storage rates. We support this amendment.

I'd like to take some time now to actually go through the commentary that we received from the various towing organizations and associations throughout Ontario. There are three different months here where they have provided commentary, and you can see a little bit of a shift over the last three months. I've got some discussion from August of this year, from September and again this month. You'll see a little bit of a shift and perhaps a little bit more concern from the sector and, as we've heard earlier, some serious concern at the thought of perhaps having this time-allocated, with only one day of hearings here in Toronto when we've got so many issues in rural and northern Ontario, where it will be difficult for their members to come here, to Toronto, for that one day of discussion. At least let me give a flavour of where they are and what their thinking is. You'll see, again, a little bit of a shift in their original thoughts and where they are today.

Back in August, we heard this from the groups: “Bill 15 is considered by the two towing associations to be a positive step towards correcting some of the problems the towing industry currently faces.” So when we look at schedule 1 of the Consumer Protection Act, specifically under 65.2, what they're saying—and this part applies to consumer transactions involving tow and storage services. What the industry is saying is, to eliminate any confusion on the description of the services provided by the industry, they feel there should be a distinct reference between towing and recovery, as they are two different and separate functions provided for at many collision scenes.

We see, in the same act, under 65.3: “No tow or storage provider shall charge a consumer or a prescribed person acting on behalf of a consumer for any tow or storage charges unless the consumer or prescribed person has first been given the prescribed information in prescribed manner and within the prescribed time.” There's a lot of prescriptions going on here. You'd think that Jeff Yurek would have written this as a pharmacist rather than as a critic in this sector. But the towing industry has said that the consumer or the prescribed person is not always present at a collision, and that “prescribed information” actually needs to be more defined.

Under “Exceeding estimated amount”: “Subject to the regulations ... no tow and storage provider shall charge

for services an amount that exceeds by more than 10% the authorized estimated amount or the amount computed in the authorized manner.”

What the towing organizations have said is, there are many recovery services involving collisions that are difficult or impossible to estimate reasonably accurately due to unknown circumstances. This is particularly true when it involves heavy transport trucks. In many cases, the use of outside resources, such as cranes, loaders and tipping fees, may be required, and providing an estimate will seriously delay the removal and cleanup of the scene. Further to this, the collision scene, in many cases, will be attended by employees of the tow company with no knowledge in estimating a recovery job.

I can tell you, Speaker, I drove here to Toronto from Morrisburg a week or so ago and there was, indeed, a major accident on the 401. When I was driving to Morrisburg, there was a large transport trailer that was in the ditch in between the east- and westbound lanes. I noticed it around 2 in the afternoon. There were crews working to remove all of the goods. Twenty-four hours later, I'm driving back and was stopped there for 45 minutes because there were cranes. They were off-loading what appeared to be a bread truck. The bread had all been removed, but the huge racks had to be moved, and there were cranes now on the site—this is 24 hours later—to help move the vehicle off-site.

Could you imagine how somebody could have shown up on that site the day before and given an estimate, not understanding the full breadth and scope of this particular accident? So, here we are, 24 hours later, the 401 was closed for 45 minutes while the crane was there removing—who could have imagined all of that would have been necessary?

Under 65.9, “A tow and storage provider shall not charge an amount for tow and storage services that is greater than the amount usually charged by that provider for the same services merely because the cost is to be paid” by an insurance agent. Right? You need to have clarifications in this that discuss what the rates are and what these limitations are. Some of these are just very reasonable amendments that at least we need an opportunity to discuss. In a time-allocated motion and one day of hearings, we're not going to have the opportunity to discuss even the bare bones of these amendments that the towing industry—and this is only on their small section of this act.

Under 65.10, “A tow and storage provider who ... has an interest in a location or facility to which a vehicle may be towed for repair” etc.—they're commenting, “We feel it would be more appropriate that this should read ‘shall disclose to the consumer whose vehicle is being towed the nature and extent of the interest in the location if the location is not owned or operated by the tow operator.’” Again, these are reasonable points that bear discussion at committee and bear hearing from the industry.

1610

On 65.10(2): “If a tow and storage provider fails to make the disclosure required under subsection (1), the

provider shall not demand or receive payment from a consumer....” Again, that won’t be necessary if it is reworded in the way we had discussed earlier.

Under 65.11(1): “A tow and storage provider shall provide a consumer with a copy of the Tow and Storage Consumers Bill of Rights in the manner required by the regulations made under subsection (2).”

They’re suggesting this would be difficult at the scene of a collision as, many times, the consumer is not present. This, however, could and should be posted in their place of business.

There’s a debate here on the contents of the vehicle: “Unless the regulations provide otherwise”—etc., etc.—“every tow and storage provider that provides tow and storage services ... shall provide the consumer or a person acting”—they want them to have “access to the vehicle that is the subject of the tow....”

What the industry is suggesting is, this does not happen when payment is reasonably assured and only happens when the tow call is a law enforcement call. It is a normal situation for the professionals in the industry to release prescribed drugs, baby seats and other paraphernalia—groceries, important documents, eyeglasses etc. However, when a vehicle is deemed to be abandoned, or has abandoned tools etc., those would be retained to persuade payment of services. The industry continues to believe that when providing law enforcement tows, they’re working for the government, and payment should be guaranteed.

They also talk about an opportunity where a lien exists on the vehicle, which includes the articles within the vehicle, and the tow operator could be held responsible if the articles are either stolen or damaged when not stored properly. If these articles must be released, does this mean there’s no lien on these articles in the first place? Interesting point. It bears debating. It bears discussion at a committee, not a time-allocated discussion where you can’t bring up these salient points and have a good debate on them.

If this is the case, they go on to say, then the storer should be absolved of any responsibility for the contents of the vehicle. Again, they make an interesting point. You have to have the opportunity to debate these points.

Their third comment is, does the release of articles include cargo etc., from transport trucks when, in some cases, the only security available from a transport collision is indeed that cargo? This is very important when dealing with US or out-of-province transport trucks. They make a good point. It would be a good debate to have and a good discussion to have at the committee level. But if you limit the debate, if you limit the time to discuss these, how can you have that debate?

They get to the “no charge to consumer” section: “A tow and storage provider shall not charge a fee for permitting access in accordance with subsection (1) unless the regulations provide otherwise.”

They’re suggesting that many consumers want access to their vehicles after normal business hours. Sending an employee in to release contents costs the tow operator

time and money, and a charge for the service would normally apply. Is that reasonable? It could be. Again, we should be discussing this in committee.

They’re talking about the failure to comply, so their comment is that it is considered extremely unfair that the government expects the towing industry to clear the highway of vehicles and debris and not be paid for their services.

Again, I bring your attention to when I was driving to Morrisburg a couple of weeks ago. I saw that a major transport trailer was on its side in the ditch. The contents—the bread—were strewn everywhere. The highway was closed intermittently for more than 12 hours, but when I got there, it was closed for 45 solid minutes while the crane came in.

Should the towing companies and the companies that are there, that are cleaning the debris, be paid for the service of cleaning the debris off the highway or just to pick up the truck and tow it away and leave the bread and the racks there? Interesting. We should be having that kind of debate.

There’s a chapter here on payment options. In the act, 65.15 says, “A tow and storage provider shall accept payment for tow and storage services by credit card, cash or any other prescribed payment method at the consumer’s choice.” Interesting. This reads like: Any payment method the consumer wants to use is acceptable, and that is exactly how I would read this as well. So the towing sector believes that at least two major cards—and they go on to quote them: Visa and MasterCard—should be acceptable, because it’s not normal business practice to accept a cheque or a purchase order from someone who is distant, out of the country or out of the province. You may never see or hear from them again. Again, is that reasonable? We should be discussing this in committee.

On that section again, they’re talking about how you calculate the price. They are suggesting that to standardize a pricing matrix is an acceptable improvement.

So they’re agreeing with some things here, as well, because it will eliminate any confusion with invoicing. However, the setting of prices will cause problems and some consumers will suffer. It’s possible.

Under 65.20, they say, “While we realize there is much to do regarding the drafting of the regulations to provide for qualifications and training,” they want to ensure consideration for the two provincial towing associations to provide such training, including temporary certificates for newcomers to the industry. “The towing industry is facing a critical shortage of drivers and other personnel, and training and temporary permits must be readily available.”

They make a good case. It’s unfortunate that it sounds like we’re not going to have a chance to hear any of these amendments from them because of this time allocation possibility. That’s why I’m bringing these today: We have an opportunity right now for you to hear some of the things, to understand that these aren’t quick solutions. This is going to take some debate to actually talk about



each one of their points. They make some very, very, very salient points here, and I think they deserve, and all of us deserve, the opportunity to debate these.

Actually, under "Failure to meet qualifications," they sum it all up. Their comment is, "Before any of these items can be implemented, the towing industry must have substantial input." I would agree with that. I would hope that you would agree with that.

They go on at considerable length talking about the Highway Traffic Act, that it will not solve chasing problems or truck maintenance issues and will add unnecessary financial burden to professional towing companies. It diminishes their consumer service.

This list from them goes on and on. There's not going to be enough time for me to discuss the next eight, nine, 10 further amendments and clarifications that they have. There's just not enough time here, and that's why we're hoping that we'll get this into committee and have a wholesome and a fulsome debate at committee, so that we can hear from the association, and not just the association but many of the operators who are located.

As I go through the update from their minutes of September 29, they have made further changes: three, six, eight, 16, 22 more changes here that there just sadly is not enough time for me to go over. But I can tell you that in their summation, what they are saying here—I'll quote it; it's only a couple of sentences. It's one long sentence: "While there are some very encouraging aspects of Bill 15, we feel it will not address the needs of the consumer nor the industry, and will definitely increase the cost of doing business, making it even harder to hire employees; interfere with customer service; and increase the cost of doing business for many towing companies."

This is a definitive answer from them. You saw what they brought in August. You hear some of the tone of where they are in September.

"We believe some of the initiatives will result in the loss of even more operators. Thus, consumer service will once again suffer." These are exactly the laws of unintended consequences that we spoke of earlier.

1620

"We also believe"—this is from the towing industry—"that Bill 15 as written will not address the main issue facing the consumer, being accident chasing, nor does it address the shortcomings of an incident management system that includes this industry and will increase the cost of doing business for the professionals in the industry, and especially if municipal licensing continues. The towing associations firmly believe the most effective and efficient path to consumer protection is through an administrative authority. We must protect the consumer and manage the industry with minimal additional expense." Speaker, that's how you help lower costs.

So here we are now in August, and what they're saying is, "The towing association is concerned with the legislation in the following areas." They've gone on to list all their areas, and they end with the sentence, Speaker, and so will I, "... propose the amendments in com-

mittee to clarify and adjust these principles." They plan to bring these amendments, and I congratulate the sector.

Thank you, Speaker, for this hour opportunity to talk a little bit about insurance rates.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, it's an honour to be able to stand in this House and comment on Bill 15, about bringing down auto insurance, and to follow the member from Nipissing. His remarks are always well researched. I don't agree with all of them, but he brings up some very good points.

I'd like to bring it back down to some of the people who depend on insurance after they get into an accident.

Mr. Walter Rancourt came into our office because he heard we were talking about insurance, about changing insurance, and he wanted to make sure that I understood what happens when you get involved from the victim's side, from the accident side.

Mr. Rancourt and his wife were involved in a tragic accident in Hagar in my riding, where three teenagers were tragically killed. He relayed his story and how it was the fault of the road. To the OPP's credit and to the MTO's credit, the OPP kept up the investigation until they found the exact time of day where you basically didn't see the corner. When that was proven, MTO stepped up and they changed the road. But three people died because of a bad design.

Mr. Rancourt and his wife had some injuries as well, quite grave injuries. One of the bad things about it if this bill is time-allocated and once again there's no committee going out into the country is that Mr. Rancourt will never be able to tell you what actually happens when you get involved with the insurance sector. What he really wanted to be able to tell us—he wanted to tell his whole story, but he really wanted to be able to tell us, "Please don't try to make insurance rates go down on the backs of the victims of accidents." We're afraid that that's one of the things this bill is trying to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** J'ai le plaisir maintenant de parler aussi de soutenir le projet de loi 15, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014.

Speaker, as you'll appreciate, there are many, many moving parts. I appreciate the studied remarks of the honourable member from Nipissing—perhaps one of the future leaders of the Conservative Party. Who knows?

He did speak a number of times about the time allocation. Well, I can tell you, Speaker, speaking to my own community of Etobicoke North, for them the time is now. We need to move forward on this issue of reducing insurance rates. There are a number of areas, particularly in the GTHA, that are affected, as you know, more than others, particularly Etobicoke North and others.

The other thing I would say is that some have faulted the government for not immediately achieving the proposed 15% reduction. I would say that, as I've mentioned, there are lots of moving parts. It's a bit of an

intense beast to wrestle to the ground, meaning the insurance industry. We are on path to reduce by 15% insurance rates. We are targeting August 2015. As our numbers are telling us, we have seen an approximate 6% across-the-board reduction. Is that for everyone in the province of Ontario? No. Is it an average? Yes, and obviously there are some mathematics that are attached to it.

I do appreciate what the MPP for Nipissing mentioned about some of the issues. One of the things that strikes us, as some of my colleagues reminded me, was being able to choose your own autobody shop.

There does, unfortunately, seem to be a lot of, let's say, prefabricated manipulation in the system, which leads to the \$1.6 billion of annualized fraud in this industry, and that is of course something that we must address through FSCO and other means to reduce overall costs for Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The member for Nipissing has given us an excellent summary of Bill 15. I'm particularly interested in the related insurance costs coming from the towing industry: storage yards, garages, health clinics.

By and large, these companies, these garages provide an efficient, reputable service, but there is a minority that are taking advantage of consumers and their insurance coverage—another reason to move this to committee.

Many of us, of course, have had experiences with the towing industry. By and large, mine have been very positive, with companies down in Haldimand–Norfolk—which is understandable, given the age of some of the vehicles I drive. They're there to help out, and their reputation is evident. The same goes for CAA. I'm a long-standing member, and I value their service. Not all companies meet the expected standards: That's an understatement.

Part of the tow truck business is a tangled web of connections—in some cases, fraud and organized crime. We think of bikers, in many instances. We recall the incident down in Shedden, near London, a few years ago—an eight-person massacre. Three of the eight victims were tow truck drivers. I think there was at least one tow truck at the scene. A number of the people involved were members or affiliates of a well-known motorcycle gang, but I will not mention their name.

We have the dark side of the towing industry: the fraud rings, the inflation of insurance claims in particular, as was mentioned, with autobody storage, kickbacks from garages, kickbacks from repair shops and the connection with health care clinics and legal service providers, as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I was listening very attentively to the comments and the very good speech that was given by the member from Nipissing. I always enjoy being in the House when he speaks. He brings a different perspec-

tive. He brings a perspective from northern Ontario, something that we, as northern members, should be doing a little bit more of each and every time we stand in the House and speak to particular bills.

The member from Etobicoke North: You did make a note that we should be acting now. You're absolutely right: That's what we should be doing. Unfortunately, the acting that is happening, particularly across my riding—the action we have taken has had a reverse impact on insurance rates across northern Ontario—or I'll just speak for Algoma–Manitoulin, because those are the areas I'm particularly looking at.

When you bring it back to a lot of the points we raised, we certainly don't want to leave here today, or the future discussions that we're going to have on this particular bill, painting the towing and garage industry with the same paintbrush: that all of them are looking out for their own pockets. There are a lot of good people out there who are working 24 hours a day to help all of us deal with our crises when we're dealing with accidents. So I certainly don't want to leave our listeners thinking that's what we're talking about. But we do want to recognize that it is a problem and that fraudulent incidents are happening out there.

I want to bring it back to what I had spoken to earlier, and it's some of the incentives that are already in the system now that this bill is going to remove. I hope that I will have the opportunity to speak to this a little bit later on behalf of people from Algoma–Manitoulin.

1630

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's it for questions and comments. We return to the member from Nipissing for his reply.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I want to thank the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Etobicoke North, Haldimand–Norfolk and Algoma–Manitoulin for their thoughtful commentary on this bill as well.

In summary, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party has, specifically through our member for Elgin–Middlesex–London, who has done the hard work to come up with a thoughtful approach on insurance—I want to thank him for the past three years' work on this file. With some of the changes that we're recommending, and by listening to stakeholders, we can guarantee a better product for all of Ontario.

I think that through a competitive marketplace, rates will go down through competition. We shouldn't have to be doing this, Speaker, every two years. I'm hoping that all the parties will get together, support the areas of this bill that actually address the rate reduction, and not implement the law of unintended consequences or just rob Peter to pay Paul. I want to see the members here support the rest of our ideas, to create a system that provides better outcomes for everyone in Ontario.

I'm so pleased that we've heard from stakeholders, including advocates for accident victims, who have concerns about this bill. There are concerns about every aspect of it, especially the towing sector, and I think it's



important that we listen to those concerns and we have some good, healthy debate on this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** I look forward to speaking for a little while on this bill. We take a look at the title, and the title is, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. When we take a look at that title, some people look at it and expect exactly what the title says, that this bill is going to correct all fraud within the industry and that insurance rates will go down immediately. I learned a while back that you can't always judge a book by its cover.

The member from Nipissing spent quite a bit of time discussing industry comments, discussing more of the economic—his background is in business—approach to the bill. I will as well, but I'm also going to take a look at the users of the insurance industry, the people who are paying the premiums, and the victims, wherever possible. It was New Democrats, for years, who have been fighting for lower auto insurance, and we are pleased that finally the government, in 2013, saw the light and agreed to reduce insurance rates by 15%. I'll talk about that a little bit later.

When I campaigned in my riding for this position, I can tell you that I heard affordability as one of the major issues. In northern Ontario, in Sudbury, when we talked about hydro rates, people were very anxious to see what could be done to reduce hydro rates, and we see that the rates are going up again this Saturday. Gasoline prices in Sudbury are 12 to 13 cents higher than anywhere else, even a 15- or 20-minute drive down the road, and natural gas as well.

But when we talked about insurance rates, people were saying, "We are paying the highest." Some people did the research and some people listened to this House, and they realized, "We're paying the highest insurance in Canada. If I get an extra \$200 left in my pocket at the end of the year, that's money I can set aside for my children's education." One person who was talking about hydro said that some of the savings could go towards going on a family trip that they hadn't gone on in a long time. So insurance rates are a factor in this province that needs to be dealt with. Again, the bill title, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, is almost like a beacon, and people are saying, "Wow, this may be it." But there are some issues with the bill which I will discuss.

In no way, as was stated by other members, are we painting the entire industry with the same paintbrush. The insurance industry itself employs tens of thousands of people in this province and across the country. They provide a service which is necessary, whether it's auto, home, business or what have you. The industry is a welcomed partner in this province. We appreciate their input on this bill and on other issues. We're very glad that they themselves are getting together and forming the Canadian National Insurance Crime Services.

The industry itself sees that fraud is an issue that not only the government has to tackle, but also the industry

themselves, spending millions of dollars individually in their own businesses and their own companies to fight fraud. Hopefully the savings that they find, the savings that we find with initiatives that are taken through the government—those savings are passed on to the user.

The first issue with the bill that I have is the entire dispute resolution that's being recommended. Not being a lawyer, I asked a lot of questions as I read this bill. I spoke to a lot of people. I tried to get clarification. It's a very complicated topic. When we talk about a litigious type of setting, a lot of laws are in place. You ask several lawyers the same question, and you might get different answers from each and every one of them. So it's a very complicated topic, and I understand that.

That just makes me wonder what type of education is going to follow whatever bill comes out of this House, in terms of the end-user understanding that, if this bill gets passed, as is, a lot of things that they're used to are going to be taken away, a lot of the mechanisms in place for them to appeal a denial are going to be taken away. The education piece is going to be huge because some people believe in a democratic system. For example, they have the right to go to court, and all of a sudden, that might be taken away. So it's going to be a very hard sell. I'll speak to that in a second.

One of the major issues, as I continue, is dispute resolution, thinking again to the end-user—the user of the insurance, the victim, the person who got into an accident. How does revamping the dispute resolution mechanism benefit them in the pocketbook? How does it benefit them having more money at the end of the day? Are there savings in revamping the dispute mechanism? What are those savings? What are the results going to be in lowering insurance rates, if any? What effect does it have on reducing fraud—changing this dispute resolution section—in the industry?

Currently, accident victims have the right to go to court or arbitration to dispute a wrongful denial. But under the proposed legislation the right to sue will be taken away entirely and require a claimant to advance claims to the Licence Appeal Tribunal in the Ministry of the Attorney General. This is denial of access to justice for Ontarians when they are most vulnerable. I'm going to talk about that.

Again, a person might have just gotten into an accident. They might be physically impeded and might be off work because of it. They may be drained, emotionally and psychologically. And, all of a sudden, something that they've been raised with, the notion that another part of the government—the judiciary—that they have access to, has been taken away. I think that's wrong.

We have been fortunate in Ontario with open courts and with the right of citizens to seek redress through the courts for wrongs committed by others and denial of benefits by insurance companies. For the sake of efficiency, expediency and cost savings to the insurance industry, the government is proposing to wipe out recourse to the independent judiciary system that safeguards a fundamental right of citizens and to replace the courts with a tribunal.

It is false to suggest that this would provide cost savings to the insurance industry and reduce insurance premiums. If the government on their side—and if we have the ability to speak further on this in committee or in this House—if the figures can come forward saying that changing or removing this appeal process, people being able to go to the court system, if this is saving money somehow for the industry and those savings are getting passed on to the user and by how much, well let's hear those numbers. But those numbers will come out only through discussion and co-operation, which our party—this is obviously a policy lowering auto insurance, which was central to our platform. We want to contribute. We want to contribute. We want to contribute ideas.

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So how will this new dispute resolution system work? Under the legislation, an accident victim will take their case to a new arbitration system. While the new system may be appropriate to handle many of the disputes in the system, it certainly is not appropriate to handle all of them. One of the significant disadvantages of the new system is that if the accident victim is successful in proving that the insurance company should have paid the denied claim, the insurance company is fined a tiny fraction of the legal costs. They would have been, under the court system, responsible for a higher cost or a higher portion.

Again, you have the victim, who possibly was in an accident, possibly out of work, possibly under strain psychologically, emotionally—and then they're happy: "I went to arbitration, and I won." Then they get the bill from a lawyer or from another legal professional, and they have to pay mostly the entire amount. But if it was under a court system, they possibly could have had that entire amount paid. The victim is being victimized again by a new system.

This was brought up by another member—I thought I was the only one who caught this—and I think it was the member from Nipissing: What will the cost be for the government, for the taxpayers of this province, for this expanded tribunal system under the Attorney General, or for a new tribunal system itself? We would suspect, and I would suggest, that there has to be a movement of personnel; there has to be movement of HR into an expanded tribunal system. Bodies; HR: That means money. In addition, there must be support staff, you would assume. You would assume that there's a need for more office space—I won't get into the fact that this government has a whole bunch of office space across the street that they just purchased. But office space costs money. So what is the cost?

There is a shift from, now, the court system—expenses by the insurance company; if they're doing arbitration or mediation, FSCO; of the courts—and it's being shifted to the Attorney General's office into this new tribunal system. So what is the cost to the taxpayer at a time when all parties agree that we need to get the deficit down? I look forward, in discussion, whether at committee or in this House, to having that answered.

If the accident victim is injured and it was 100% someone else's fault, the victim now has to pay a lawyer to bring two entirely different cases in two entirely different systems: one to court, against the person who injured them, and then one to the new arbitration system, against the insurance company that denied the benefits. The accident victim now has huge extra legal costs and two different legal proceedings: one in the court system, and one in the arbitration system. Again, looking at this whole issue in terms of the victim, this new arbitration system, or tribunal system, is actually penalizing a person who got into an accident and it wasn't their fault. In fact, they do eventually earn the monies owed to them from the insurance company, yet through spending more money.

Bill 15 also takes away the right of an accident benefit claimant to bring the claim before the civil courts. Currently, a claimant may bring an accident benefits claim before the civil courts as long as he or she participates in FSCO mediation with the insurance company. This may be useful to a claimant with both a tort and an accident benefits claim. The new bill seeks to limit the claimant's choice in this regard by mandating that the claimant can never—that word is kind of contradictory to our democratic system, I think—bring an accident benefits claim to the civil courts.

Again, raised in this democratic system, with a degree in political science from wonderful Laurentian University in Sudbury—we always were taught that the judiciary was another branch of the government that the people have a right to approach. This is going to be taken away, in terms of insurance claims.

What makes more sense is to allow an accident victim the right that they currently have: to bring the two claims together in court and to vastly reduce the costs that they have to incur.

None of these changes has anything to do with fighting fraud or nothing to do with making it easier for us to buy auto insurance. But what it is about, it seems, is to have insurance companies wrongfully deny benefits, delay settlements and make it harder for someone to collect what is rightfully owed to them.

Our auto insurance system here in Ontario is extremely complicated to begin with. People's access to benefits that they are reasonably entitled to is sometimes difficult to receive. What this new process is going to result in is people putting up their hands and being extremely frustrated. We see that happen. Months and months and months of trying to really receive the money that's owed to them even once it's been deemed, "Yes, you're owed it"—the next thing you know, they just put up their hands and say, "I've had it. I've had it. I'm not pushing through anymore, with any more."

The second problem I have is, what is this prejudgment interest, and the idea that if somebody is even owed the money—it's deemed that yes, your denial is overturned and you're owed money for pain and suffering—then insurance companies today have to pay 5% interest on that money. If it takes a year for an insurance com-



pany, for example, to pay a \$100,000 claim, the person who is owed that money is now entitled to \$105,000, after that year. It doesn't seem like a lot, but expand that to millions, tens of millions and hundreds of millions of claims that come out of this industry in Ontario and in Canada, and it's a lot of money.

This proposed legislation is now saying that we're going to reduce that to 1.3%. Now, on that same claim, the insurance company is only going to have to pay \$1,300 in interest. The problem with that is, it reduces the motivation for insurance companies to pay quicker. Why? Well, because insurance companies make a lot of money by investing money. Premiums are part of their profit; a lot of it is investment. About 4% is what I read that an insurance company will usually get on a return on their investment. For that same \$100,000, now they only pay \$1,300 in interest. They earn \$4,000 in interest from their investments, and they've netted \$2,700.

Are all insurance companies doing this? No. Is it possible? Yes. That's an issue we have. Why reduce that 5%? Why not leave it at a rate which will motivate the payment of what's owed a victim?

We talked about fraud. In 2012, the report from the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force said that fraud costs us about \$770 million to \$1.6 billion a year. I would like to have a longer discussion in terms of what the government's plans are to tackle fraud, the big fraud cases which I'll talk about in a second. It's very important.

Last week, my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, on October 22, did a really good description of fraud and what it entails. He broke down fraud into three major components: organized fraud; fraud that might come from a medical provider, a health provider; and then individual fraud, the incidentals: "My car was stolen and I had a laptop in there"—when there wasn't one. We learned that, in 2010, because the insurance companies were not making the profits they expected, the government reduced the amount that could be claimed for injury from \$100,000 to, in some cases, \$3,500; and in some cases, \$50,000; and of course the catastrophic injuries were still at \$1 million.

But a lot of the frauds, say, from the health field or from the incidentals, the individuals, were reduced because the amount of injury claims allowable went down. Is it still there? Possibly; that's work that has to be done. But the big one that costs a lot is organized crime.

Last week, we heard examples from the Conservative caucus of accidents that are orchestrated; accidents caused by somebody who takes advantage of somebody who's victimized, and then the claim begins. The tow trucks come in and go to various autobodies etc. I can't say personally that I've seen that in Sudbury or anywhere else, but apparently it happens. I remember watching one of these CSI shows; I tried to find it. I couldn't find where or when, but it was years back where in one episode—and I hope I don't give anybody ideas. One episode was, they disconnected the brake lights on vehicles, and there was an influx of rear-enders. Finally, the CSI guys, these investigators, realized it was

organized crime. They would go in front of a vehicle, slam on the brakes—no brake lights—cause an accident and start the insurance process.

**1650**

Again, a lot of work has to be done. We hear that the government is going to tackle fraud and these organized types of fraud incidents. I look forward to hearing more about that, but we need to have that discussion. We need to have that discussion.

Some of the things in the bill that would benefit the victim—we do have to hear from our stakeholders more—are the licensing of insurance agents and adjusters. The ones I know are very reputable. Again, we can't paint any industry with a brush because of a few negative folks who do things wrong.

My question is, by licensing these adjusters, how is that going to affect the rates? What are the numbers? How are our rates going to go down because of it? The same with licensing health clinics: How is it going to reduce the rates?

In terms of the towing and storage components and the repair and storage liens, I welcome consumer protection in this area. I also appreciate that the industry itself—the vast majority—I'd say close to 100% are very reputable. I'd like to hear more about how they want to improve this consumer protection charter, if you will.

Having authorization by an owner to take the car, or at least know where the car is going, I think, is important. Making rates public, I think, is important. Allowing someone the flexibility to use a credit card, I think, is important. Allowing people access to a vehicle for their personal items, I think, is important. Providing qualifications and standards for the industry: I think they'd welcome that, as long as they have input on what they are.

I'm quickly running out of time. I think that the province of Ontario mandates auto insurance. Therefore, we have the right, I think, to protect the victims and business and the companies and come up with a solution that betters everybody. That's why we're here, hoping that there's discussion for that.

I'd like to know what the profits of the companies are. Why are we paying so much insurance? The government promised, in 2013, a 15% reduction in auto insurance. We're here to hold you to account. We appreciate that you accepted the NDP's numbers and pushed for that. You're saying the first year was 6%. Let's get to 15%. We're far from it. This bill needs to be worked on to get there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's always a pleasure to talk about this particular bill in relation to insurance. I had the opportunity to speak last week, I believe it was, on a response for two minutes.

We try to put measures in place to deal with premiums for auto insurance, but a lot of it—we determine what that premium is going to be. I had some challenges with insurance in the past—I'm not afraid to admit it—but I

deserved it. I deserved it; I have to be honest. But I think my driving habits have improved considerably, so my premiums have been reduced considerably.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Good. Who's your insurance broker, Lou?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That's a good question. The thing is, I always try to deal locally, with people you know, because you know they're going to work for you.

My good friend Gary Newman, from Campbellford, and his family own Newman Oliver & McCarten. They have offices in Belleville, Colborne and, of course, Campbellford. I've known Gary since way, way back in my municipal days. You can actually sit down and kind of tailor-make what's best for you. So I always encourage dealing with an independent broker, because they're really there working for you. They do take the time to make sure.

Yes, the pieces of this particular legislation will help, but I encourage folks that, really, they have some control over what their premium is going to be, what their coverage is going to be.

I think we need to pass this legislation. Let's move on to other things the government is supposed to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's a pleasure to rise again to provide a couple of moments of comment to the speaker, in this case the member for Sudbury.

Again, I, like the previous speaker from Northumberland-Quinte West, have a number of people in the insurance business who are amazing business people. They have given me lots of feedback on insurance issues, right from the day I was elected to this place in 2010.

But again, I want to put some comments back on the record regarding the towing provisions in this particular bill. Since our leadoff speaker from our party, Mr. Fedeli, spoke, I've been here reading notes about a number of the towing associations and organized groups and some of their concerns to the bill. Again, I think there is a way that we can co-operate to move this bill forward.

This was one of the bills that the government House leader gave to me that they wish to have fast-tracked through the Legislature. I think it's not unreasonable, when you deal with this amount of bills, to help schedule some things. I know the member from Sudbury would love to have a hearing on this bill up in his municipality so that the people of northern Ontario can be given a chance to discuss the intricacies of the bill. I know there have been a number of members who have brought up suggestions to improve the bill. I know in previous incarnations, we had a great discussion, a very robust discussion. Part of what we do in this place is we allow our constituents to have a forum outside of the city of Toronto where they can put in a few comments. I hope that the member will support me on having hearings in northern Ontario. I hope, in return, he'd maybe support one in eastern Ontario to assist my constituents.

Thank you very much for giving me the chance to provide my comments, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Once again, it's a pleasure and a privilege to stand and speak on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin. I want to commend my colleague here, the MPP for Sudbury. He did talk about one of the cornerstones of our platform, which was affordability. In a lot of our communities across northern Ontario, small rural communities, we don't have transportation readily available. We don't have buses. We don't have subways. What we do have are our vehicles in our driveways. That's the challenge that we have. So we have to have an operating vehicle in good condition, with good snow tires in the wintertime, but also we need to pay that insurance. Why? Because that's the only means of transportation that we have to get to and from work, to get to and from school, to get to and from hospitals, to bring our kids to a hockey game, to a ballet class, and so on and so forth. This is the reality of living in northern Ontario.

When we hear titles on bills such as this one, which is very enticing to everybody—An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways—that is something that is very attractive. But what exactly is it going to do, which was what my colleague was raising during his comments. What will it do? How will it impact and what are going to be the actual cost savings? Will there be a rate reduction? Who will be saving? Are we taking money out of Paul's pocket to pay Peter? These are some of the questions that we're going to be raising through this process and making sure that we have the opportunity to actually have those discussions so that we could hear—like the member from Sudbury making sure that his constituents' voices and concerns are heard.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to first thank the member from Sudbury for his comments on this particular piece of legislation, Bill 15.

As the member from Northumberland-Quinte West did, I'll give a shout-out to my local broker in Thunder Bay, Brucie MacDonald from Lifestyle Insurance. Brucie is always taking care of me, and I'll say a quick thank you to Bruce.

I would also thank the minister responsible for the legislation. It's one thing to set a target of 15% reductions across the board, on average, in the province of Ontario for auto insurance premiums. But it's another thing, I would say, to really get in there and do the work and get your fingernails dirty, so to speak, and have to try and find the means and the mechanisms and the ways to achieve the goal. I know that the minister has been doing that, and staff have been doing that, for a while. They're working very closely on a variety of policy initiatives that are going to help us to achieve that goal. We're at 6% now; the target was 8%. We're getting close to that, and over the term of two years we're looking at the 15%.



1700

The member from Sudbury, in his 20-minute remarks, referenced the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. What I would say, though, is that as a newer member, he may not be aware that it was that member who, two or three years ago, introduced a private member's bill, which is fine, representing his constituency, as he should. But the point of that private member's bill was auto insurance reform. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, in that specific private member's bill, would have achieved reductions for his constituency. But at the same time, for those of us in northern Ontario, his bill, had it become law, would have seen insurance rates in northern Ontario increase by anywhere from 30% to 40%, depending on who you talk to.

I know the member may not have been aware of that. Again, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton was just representing the interests of his constituency, but I think it's worth noting and reminding the member, as a new member in the Legislative Assembly, that that would have been the effect for people in northern Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Sudbury for his two-minute response.

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** To the members from Northumberland–Quinte West, Leeds–Grenville and Algoma–Manitoulin, and the Minister of Natural Resources, thank you for your comments. As a new member, I still look forward to debating in the House and in committee.

I think our goal is the same: It's to get the best possible bill out for the benefit of the victim, the insurance premium payer, as well as for the industry. The industry itself is a huge partner in the economic development of this province, providing an essential service. The towing and storage companies are, again, very important components to the entire system, and we appreciate their hard work. What this is about, though, is making sure that the bill does what the title says, and that's to fight fraud and reduce auto insurance rates for those folks here in Ontario.

I think there are issues with the dispute resolution piece. There are issues with the reduction of the interest rate that companies pay for pain and suffering. We need more discussion on fraud fighting, and we need more numbers in terms of what components of the bill will result in reductions in auto insurance.

Again, one of the most important components of this is going to committee. At that venue, we can discuss it further, and we can also hear from stakeholders. I think the ones at the front line are the ones with the ideas. As a city councillor, if I had an issue with trash collection, I went to the front-line worker. I think it's the same with any bill. So I look forward to further debate and discussing this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It is a great pleasure to speak to this bill, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. This is my first opportunity to speak

at length to a bill since having been elected to this House in June. I appreciate very much that the member from Sudbury, who also is a rookie, got up and spoke very eloquently in this House. He should be commended for his remarks.

When I rose the first time in what we will call my inaugural speech, I thought I was speaking to a bill and that I would have a chance to do a full inaugural speech and you would have learned more about who I was, where I came from. But unfortunately, as it turned out, we were speaking to a motion that day, and it was ruled out of order for me to do my inaugural speech. I felt terrible; I never had a chance to give those remarks. Then I thought, "Well, the next time I get up to speak, I can do an inaugural speech, because I haven't done one." I was reminded by the Clerk that in fact I had done an inaugural, but it was to a motion, so, sadly, I couldn't go through the great history of my family. It's okay, because we'll have other opportunities; I can drop little nuggets maybe once in a while, and you'll get to know better who I am.

But it does give me pleasure—

**Interjection:** They must have insurance, so tell us about that.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Yes. I could tell you about my parents' insurance, right?

But it gives me pleasure. Just before I had a chance to come back to my seat, it was occupied. My colleague the Minister of Agriculture was sitting in my seat, so I feel particularly inspired at this opportunity to speak. As the PA to agriculture, I'm—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I know, but as the PA to agriculture, food and rural affairs, I'm learning so much from my colleague about the folksy nature that you want to bring into the House and—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Get on my good side.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Yes, get on his good side.

What I'd first like to do, Mr. Speaker, is to maybe debate or discuss at some length this concept of an ominous bill. I mean, seriously, we are putting two acts together here, two acts that specifically reference the same subject matter, which is to do with reducing fraud and reducing insurance rates. This is not an ominous bill, as we've come to know them in the past. We are not—

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Omnibus.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** —omnibus bill, as we've come to know them in the past. The reality is that the members of the official opposition—their cousins in Ottawa know how to do an omnibus bill. They put in legislation that comes from everything, from child care to finance. Those are the experts.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** A point of order: The member for Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I really believe that the member should stick to his debate on Bill 15.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I appreciate you pointing that out, because yes, of course, the

convention in the House is that members' remarks are relevant to the bill at hand. Of course, we're debating Bill 15, so I would ask the member to bring back his comments to Bill 15.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Fair enough, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I'm sure that's fair game for the times I've risen in the House to make the same complaint of the member.

But here we are talking about the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. Let's understand: This was an election promise that we fought on very hard during the campaign, and it predated the election. In fact, we've introduced legislation in the past.

We are promising a 15% reduction in auto insurance rates, and we're getting there. We're on target. We were projected to try to get to 8% by August of this year, and sadly we've not made that target. Let's be clear: We would have had a much better opportunity to be further along in that agenda had we not in fact intervened the process, and had we adopted the measures that we're proposing here from the Minister of Finance back when they were first—they were suspended by the election.

Now, I'm not complaining, because as you know and as the member from Sudbury knows, in the absence of that election, we wouldn't be here to address the House and have this opportunity to speak to the bill. But what I would like to say is, I think what we are doing with this bill is we are doing it the right way, because we understand very much the business of insurance and the underwriters of insurance. They are the ones who are telling insurance companies, who relay back to the brokers—these fine brokers that we're hearing about from various communities in Peterborough, Northumberland and Campbellford—what the rates must be. The rates must be at a certain level in order to accommodate the costs associated with providing those rates.

So we're doing it the right way because we're respecting what underwriters have to say about the cost of insurance. It's not some idealized vision, where we can just say, "These are big insurance companies. We're the government. Tell them to lower rates"—no. We need to go into the systemic problems associated with what is costing the insurance companies the money in order to get the rates down, and that, of course, does relate to fraud. It relates to fraud and mismanagement in some of the insurance—we are not talking about all companies in the business acting fraudulently. There are those, however—like so many bills, we have to bring in the rules and regulations to protect against fraud, against those narrow few who abuse the process. That's what we're doing. I think the fraud has been estimated at somewhere in the order of \$1.6 billion that we could get to—\$750 million to \$1.6 billion. So there are ample opportunities to get at the fraud in the system by putting the right rules and regulations in place.

As a new member, I know that we are getting tremendous resources placed in front of us. I'd like to bring members back to Provincial Affairs: An Overview for Ontario Legislators. I want to talk about some of the

material in this book, because it has been an excellent primer to a new member. The member for Sudbury, I encourage you to read the sections on insurance rates.

What makes me particularly happy about talking to this particular section, auto insurance, is that it was authored by a very good friend of mine, Andrew McNaught. Andrew McNaught has been a member of legislative library services going back some 20 years. We went to high school together, we played hockey together, and I know him to be a knowledgeable and thorough researcher. I would encourage all members, when they have an opportunity to put together bills, to seek out the help of the legislative library assistants because they're very good at what they do.

1710

What he says, and I found it very instructive, is that it is a constant challenge facing policymakers how to balance three competing interests: maintaining a financially viable insurance industry; ensuring adequate and timely compensation for accident victims; and keeping driver premiums affordable. This is exactly the balance which I think we're trying to strike in the act in front of us. We are respecting the financial acumen of underwriters. We want to make sure that we put systems in place so that dispute resolutions can happen quickly and so that people can get the fair compensation that they, legitimate accident victims, deserve.

I'm particularly interested in some of the comments we've heard from the members of the third party regarding prejudgment interest rates. I did have a chance earlier to speak on a two-minute rebuttal, and I talked at some length. Let's be clear: Prejudgment interest is not there as a stick to force people to settle early. Believe me, the costs of litigation within the system are sufficiently high to act as that stick, and the cost of a prejudgment interest rate is minuscule in that whole process. We are not settling disputes faster because of accumulating 5% associated interest penalties; we're settling them because of the cost of litigation and the cost of the settlement. It's the cost of lawyers that you start to save in the process by streamlining it—no disrespect to lawyers, because my father was a lawyer, and had I had a chance to do my inaugural speech, you would have heard about my father the lawyer who went on to become a Supreme Court of Ontario judge. We spent a lot of time talking about the law and insurance law because Dad, in his work in commercial work, spent a lot of time helping companies reduce their insurance costs.

It's very important to understand that we need to bring the interest rate associated with insurance prejudgment rates down to a level commensurate with inflation so that people aren't losing ground during the lengthy time it has taken them to come to a settlement, that they're kept and made whole by the interest rates so that they haven't lost money to the levels of inflation that are currently in place. The one point—I think it's 8% that's being proposed in the legislation—is fair because it helps maintain that balance.

When this issue came up, I had the pleasure of meeting with a constituent of mine who owns a number



of taxicabs. He was complaining to me about the cost of insurance in the taxicab industry. I know that the 6%—only relates to residential auto rates and doesn't speak to the costs associated with commercial rates. He was somewhat concerned about that because he's seen his insurance rates for running his cab business increasing dramatically over the years, and he's looking for ways that we as a government can help resolve his concerns in the commercial industry.

I'm proud to say that a good friend of mine, Edward Doyle, who's associated with a great insurance risk management company called Doyle Risk Services—he's a constituent, down in the lovely Beaches area. Ed was able to sit down with me and explain how the initiatives we have taken in the past in addressing issues of fraud have set in motion a whole series of cost savings for residential-rate auto payers that will have accruing benefits to those in the commercial industry as well. Attacking the fraud issues, attacking issues with long periods before you get resolution, and the resulting increases in cost of settlements, can be addressed through those processes.

Though we may only be at 6% and short of the 8% target at this point, we are well on target of a 15% reduction, primarily because those initiatives that we put in place before have yet to bear their full fruit. You understand that when someone gets into an accident, it takes a period of time with adjusters, and then you have your accident victim claims. You go through the process with the tribunals and the arbitrations. There is a number of years' delay before the new rules will show all the benefits that we hope that they will bear.

We are now just a year and a bit into our 2013 changes, and already we're seeing reductions in interest rates, associated with anticipated reductions in claims, by those initiatives.

With the measures we're proposing today, we know that we will once again put in the pipeline significant opportunities for saving down the road by having these opportunities to get at fraud, to get at mismanagement and to get at lengthy delays.

When I met with my taxi driver friend and my friend Mr. Doyle, we also talked about other important issues that touch on the insurance industry around new technology services. In the taxi industry, primarily, we talked about a company called Uber. I'm sure you've all heard about Uber. It's an online opportunity for getting a cab to your house and back again.

Although it's an incredibly positive service—I use it with my step-kids because it allows me, with a credit card on file, to get them home safely late at night, if that's the case. But as was pointed out to me, the dispatchers of Uber aren't licensed as dispatchers, as other members in the taxi industry are, and it's something that we need to address, particularly because they're not licensed and insured as dispatchers, as is required by the members of the taxi industry.

There's another program that Uber is doing called UberX. UberX is another great cause for concern because

UberX is now directing passengers to private vehicles for taxi-like services. So now it's not just the dispatcher who is not licensed, who hasn't got insurance. It's now the drivers of the vehicles, who are picking up passengers, who haven't got insurance or licensing, opening up an incredible possibility of liability to all concerned.

Imagine the situation if an UberX driver is carrying a passenger and gets into an accident. The private insurer of that car, my guess is, will be reluctant to act on the insurance claims because they were doing something that they technically were not supposed to be doing, i.e., charging a fare to use their private car.

There's an area of a moving target here again, where I think we're going to have to step in and ensure that the rules around UberX are fair and that it's a level playing field with the taxi industry, but that they don't result in unintended consequences, with liabilities associated with drivers who will be driving around effectively uninsured, because they're doing something they're not supposed to be doing.

Most of us, I'm sure, have experienced opportunities for fraud associated with driving a vehicle, or you all have friends who have had the same experience. I had an experience driving my mother's car. My mother, who's now 86—a wonderful woman, who raised a family of seven. Dad was busy, so it was mostly on her own. My mother, at 84—this was two years ago—was driving her car to go to an uncle's funeral up in the beautiful area of Thornbury, north of here. Snowy conditions, end of January—we were driving slowly. We had a good car with good snow tires, probably doing 50 or 60 kilometres on the highway.

A car in front of us went out of control and spun around. I was able to avoid him. Went to another car—came across—lost control in the melee. The next thing I know, we were T-boned. There were no injuries, I'm happy to assert. The car was a write-off. We were going slow enough. It was just a huge inconvenience, but the car was written off.

In the third car that was involved in that collision, a young lady was on her way to pick up her daughter. She just had a little bump on her bumper—nothing of any consequence. We stood at the side of the highway as we watched tow trucks pick up other cars in the neighbourhood, rushing to the scene to clear the 401. We chatted with her for the better part of 45 minutes, until the tow trucks had cleared. She then refused the tow for her car, because it was in good-enough shape. She said she'd report to the accident collision centre later. Instead, she drove off to pick up her daughter at the day care, which was great.

Imagine our surprise a year and a half later when we get a lawyer's letter saying that my mother, 85 and a half now, and I are being sued—me, because she says I was careless and caused her injuries—which were extensive, if you read the report—and my mother, for having been foolish enough, at 85 and a half, to suggest that her 56-year-old son—55 at the time—should be driving the car.

We were shocked, because we knew there was absolutely nothing wrong with this person. At some point

along the line, some kind of litigious lawyer got involved who said, "Let's just put in a claim," because the timelines to get out there and the costs associated with an insurance company defending against that kind of thing are astronomical. The insurance companies are put on a spot where they have to defend us, themselves, to protect the dollars going out to settlement, and it was to no avail.  
**1720**

My mother, to her credit, is now saying to them, "I'm glad you're managing this. Let's go to trial. I want to be there, because I know that that woman wasn't hurt. I will be the most fierce advocate against what they have done here." Who knows? In the course of time, that may happen or not. But we've all experienced that, and it's time that we stop doing it.

I'm very interested in some of the issues surrounding the business of storage and the towing industry. I appreciate very much some of the comments we've had, particularly from the members of the loyal opposition, relating to going out on a tour to talk to the towing industry.

I'm reminded of our whip's comments and the fact that there are opportunities for people to call in and do their deputations to the committees by phone, or by other technological means, and I think we should encourage them to do that. The reality is, as we move forward on these various bills that we're trying to get passed, it isn't about the length of the debate that matters; it has to be about the quality of the debate. I've been very impressed by the quality of the debate that we've seen from the members for Nipissing and Sudbury and so many others, because what it's showing is that those very important views of constituents and operators in the field are being heard in the House, and we will have a chance at committee to make some of these adjustments.

We don't have to be taking a whole dog-and-pony show all over the province in order to hear from people when they can call in, or they can send a letter. Already, clearly, they're communicating with the members in the House.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** How can you call public participation a dog-and-pony show? I think that's an insult to—

**Interjection:** Keep going.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** There will be times where it will be absolutely necessary, and I fully respect the needs of all Ontario—east, north, south and west—to participate in debates, but when you talk about a bill that has so much near-unanimous approval, and we can't get this one right by shortening it in order to go forward with other bills, which may be far more controversial—well, I'm surprised by that. We need to move forward quickly with a whole series of legislation. Our agenda is full. We received a very healthy mandate, not just in terms of numbers of the members on this side of the House to form a majority, Mr. Speaker, but we—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Just because your constituents can drive here—

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm delighted you brought that up, because I meant to mention that. It was somewhere

buried in my notes here. My constituents, who live 15 to 20 minutes away from here, don't come down here, Mr. Speaker. They don't come down here in order to make a deputation when they know that I, as their member, can bring their issues forward on their behalf, or they will send notes and letters in. So I don't think that in this particular instance a bill that is so close to approval needs the kind of timeline in a travelling show at committee that others no doubt will need in the future. I'm looking forward, Mr. Speaker—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to having the kind of reasoned discussion around very important—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It's okay. I can shout over them. I've only got 10 seconds to go.

I'm really looking forward to having a reasoned debate around some of the amendments that have been put forward. Share them with us earlier so we can have a chance to evaluate them and move forward later.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm proud to stand up again and say a few words regarding this bill.

I do have to make a comment, though, that this member here made comment about Uber and UberX. Really, if you leave the city of Toronto, I don't think anybody in Ontario knows what the heck Uber or UberX is, because it's just not available out there. So for a government to actually focus on an industry that is only in one city in the whole province—I kind of question that when, in fact, you should be looking at the whole product as a whole to ensure savings, not only for the people in Toronto and the GTA, but actually across the province of Ontario.

Just as a note, as I was checking out Twitter here to check out what the heck Uber is, UberX is actually offering free rides to the municipal elections throughout Toronto and such, so I think if you haven't made it to the polls yet, you can probably look up UberX, whatever that might be at the end of the day, and get to the polls. However, if you live in rural Ontario, I'm sure there are possible ways for you to get to the polls, possibly through your car. However, with the cost of auto insurance due to this government's mismanagement of the file over the last 10 years, it's highly doubtful that they're able to get in the car and get in to vote, so they're probably out walking today.

Mr. Speaker, we've put through tons and tons of alternative solutions into insurance going forward. We had a four-point plan that this government didn't really listen to, although they did listen to my call on going after that fraud.

This government created this task force, and they spent a year deciding what they should go after. They came up with 38 recommendations on how to fix fraud. The Minister of Finance got this report and put it in his cupboard, right beside the Drummond report, and walked



away. They've implemented four recommendations in two years. This bill may implement two more. If the government is really serious about going after fraud, they might actually open up the report and implement all the aspects of the fraud commission's report, which, in fact, will lower rates across the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, it's an honour to speak, on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming-Cochrane, in response to the member from Beaches-East York. I'm hoping to be able to work with the member. He's the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture.

I can assure you that one thing that won't go over well in rural Ontario—no one in rural Ontario knows what Uber and UberX are; I fully agree with Mr. Yurek. And no member in rural Ontario presumes to know all the opinions of his constituents. Rural members—and, I hope, urban members, as well—value everyone's opinion.

Not everyone in my riding agrees with what I say. On issues that are really important to people in my riding, like auto insurance, they would love to have the chance to actually express their own views. I don't presume to know what everyone in my riding is thinking. I can't believe that a member would actually express that opinion.

This is about democracy. It's not about, "I'm the smartest person in the room." I'm not the smartest person—certainly not in my riding. I have the faith of the majority of the people in my riding to represent them, but I certainly don't presume to know everything about my riding. I do know that the people in my riding need to have the ability to speak to this government in their area, at their level.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate and to pass some comments on the remarks of my colleague the member from Beaches-East York.

I think when you have a province the size of Ontario, you'll find that people in the province use a variety of means of transporting themselves around, whether it's for work or for pleasure. I know that we've seen increased transit. People are into cycling. Still, at the end of the day, there's a reliance on the automobile as the main mode of transportation in the province.

What we've decided to do, as a province, is to ensure that we're protecting each other; that we've brought in a system where it's mandatory to have insurance. Obviously, the insurance we have is through private companies, co-operatives, that type of thing. Other jurisdictions have brought in public auto insurance over the years and have had mixed results. We've looked at that, as a province, from time to time.

Today I think what the member from Beaches-East York did was concentrate on the more practical aspects of this bill. When we're asking, as a government—when we're ensuring that everybody in the province has

coverage, we want to make sure, when the people come back to us and tell us what they're seeing in terms of fraud, increasing costs and a claims resolution process that's long and cumbersome—they want to see a government that takes action on that in a very practical way.

So while the debate may be raging over whether we're doing the right consultation or a variety of other things—whether we're the smartest person in our riding or not—I think what the debate really should be about is the practical aspects of this bill. By passing this bill, are you going to make auto insurance in this province easier for people to manage?

I think, on balance, Speaker, with the consultation we've done, with the improvements that are built into the proposals in Bill 15, that what we should be doing is sending it off to committee, passing it through second reading, allowing the people of the province of Ontario to come forward to pass their opinions and suggestions on to us—and then move forward, because they'd like to see this implemented.

1730

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** One last question or comment? The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely a pleasure.

I just want to reach out to the Minister of Labour. He made a comment that there's a variety of means of transport in rural Ontario. I'd like to remind the government that before we went to the election, I had tabled a resolution on rural and northern transportation, had all-party support, and it's still sitting nowhere in Neverland. It is a big issue out in rural Ontario, so we do want to bring that back, and I hope you'll be one of those people who will push that at your cabinet meeting.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** They're going to promote Uber.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** They're going to promote Uber, yes.

It's a pleasure to stand. Again, my colleague Jeff Yurek from Elgin-Middlesex-London did an awful lot of work in this critic portfolio. I think he has just touched on it—they had a report. The task force was developed and they brought back 38 recommendations. Those recommendations should have been about safety; they should have been about lowering rates and affordable rates. Again, it has been alluded to, particularly in my riding in rural Ontario. I have a 17-year old who is just buying his first car. The affordable insurance rates are astounding. They're not affordable. There's absolutely no way that he can even think of putting that car on the road. That's one of the things we need to do.

A lot of that is being driven by the fraud. We have abilities to change that. We have abilities, with the power of the government across the aisle, to come back and listen to those 38, rather than, as he said: The finance minister took that and filed it, like they did the Don Drummond report after spending millions and millions of dollars, and didn't wish to implement any of it. Well,

why are we doing all this? That's what I get asked by my constituents. "Why do you do all these reports and then at the end of the day, the government takes them and says, 'Yes, thanks, but we don't really need to listen. We're going to do this?'"

**Mr. Speaker:** We need to be accountable. It's not a dog-and-pony show, whoever referred to that, when you're out talking to constituents, to the people of Ontario, the great people of Ontario, who actually, by the way, pay all the freight for this great government that we should have for Ontario.

We need lower rates, we need it to be economical and we need to get rid of the fraud, and my critic from Elgin—Middlesex—London has done a great job of bringing that to this House. We'll continue to do that until we can get lower insurance rates.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Beaches—East York to reply.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thanks to the members from Elgin—Middlesex—London, Timiskaming—Cochrane, Oakville and Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Great fishing.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Great fishing up there—salmon fishing. I was up for the derby. I appreciate it very much.

Let's be very clear, to the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane: Check the Hansard record. At no point did I say I'm representing all the opinions, but I did say that I consult with my constituents on a regular basis. If they do have opinions about this, I do bring them back and will bring them back to the House as necessary.

**Interjection:** That's your job.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** That's what my job is.

As for the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force recommendations, over half of them were implemented before these measures came into place, and now we're moving forward with new recommendations, recommendations around transforming the dispute resolution system, regulating the towing industry, modernizing FSCO's enforcement authority and addressing vehicle storage issues. So we are taking those recommendations.

I would add that according to this excellent report on auto insurance written by my friend Andrew McNaught in Provincial Affairs, 41st Parliament: An Overview for Ontario Legislators, it says right here very clearly that according to FSCO, the 2010 reforms that we've already put in place have saved auto insurance \$2 billion in accident benefits payouts in 2011 alone. If it did it in 2011, it probably did it in 2012 and in 2013. So there we have it. We are taking those recommendations because fraud is a serious concern that we take seriously.

I appreciate that some of the reforms we're doing with the tow truck industry—I look forward to their further comments on it. We know there's widespread support in the industry for what we're trying to do. There are some small checks and balances we need to put in, but the reality when it comes to the business of storage, telling them what they have to have to do business as usual seems to be the right thing to do. We want to make sure that people don't have conflicts of interest when they

pick up your car and take it to someone else at an auto-body shop.

Those kinds of measures are in place to reduce the cost to consumers and bring premiums down. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader or a cabinet minister specifies otherwise.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** No further debate, Mr. Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 23, 2014, on the motion for second reading of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm advised that when we last debated this item of business, we had completed questions and comments on the speech from the members for Simcoe North and Nepean—Carleton, who had shared their time.

Further debate.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to offer a few minutes looking at Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act.

One of the things that I think needs to be understood at the very outset of this is whether this is actually not one step forward and two steps back, because when we look at the details of the "modernization act," it seems to me that it has thrown many thousands of people into deep concern over the direction this act takes the government. It seems in their minds that, in fact, this is an insistence by this government on making life more difficult for Ontario families and a fundamental removal of choice when it comes to child care. It's in that context, then, that I look at this particular piece of legislation.

The bill purports to update child care in the province. I think it's also important to understand the nature of the legislation that governs the categories of child care that is provided in this province. Today, we have three different categories: private in-home day cares, which have five or



fewer children; if there's more than one location, the centre becomes a private home day care agency that must be licensed under current legislation; and, finally, day nurseries, which have more than five children and must be licensed as well. Those would be the ones that most of us recognize as either for-profit or not-for-profit. They're stand-alone or they're part of schools, leisure centres or something like that.

The important thing is that 80% of children are in unlicensed private home day cares. It's important to understand that there is a demand for these facilities, the vast majority of which, of course, provide safe care for infants and toddlers. Thousands of families are happy with the care they receive and oftentimes save money by not sending their children to potentially more expensive licensed care.

Unlicensed home day cares play an important role in our province. I know several people who have opted for this type of care. Sometimes it's the only care available to families with young infants, as many licensed centres will only take children 18 months or older. Unlicensed homes can fill that gap between 12 and 18 months when families are desperate for care as parents go back to work after a 12-month maternity leave. So it's really important to understand that they have a very specific role and that they cover about 80% of the people who are seeking day care.

On October 20, the Minister of Education, in question period, implied that unlicensed child care centres are illegal. There seems to be some confusion about the difference between being unlicensed and actually illegal. From the Ministry of Education's own website: "In Ontario, individuals may look after five or fewer children under 10 years of age without a licence—in addition to their own children—if in their own home." I think we must make it clear for the public that "unlicensed" doesn't mean "illegal."

1740

There's also something that we need to understand, and that is the fact that, particularly on the heels of the publication of the Ombudsman's report, there is very clearly a history of poor administration on the part of the government.

It's important to understand that even before this piece of legislation, there was already a complaint system in effect for daycare. If someone suspects wrongdoing or danger, an inspector is supposed to investigate the child care facility in a timely manner.

But the Ombudsman's report released last week tells a very different story: a story of failure on the part of the government. Careless About Child Care is the title, and I think it speaks for itself. His report on child care consists of 113 recommendations.

The details of the kinds of problems that the Ombudsman reports demonstrate that the government has not been following its own rules. Surely we recognize that there are standards in place. There is already legislation, but we have to follow the legislation and guidelines that exist, as opposed to creating a whole new system to deal with potential problems.

The Ombudsman identifies this in his report:

- sloppy, inconsistent complaint intake practices, and an inadequate complaint tracking system;
- ministry guidelines not followed;
- inspections delayed or never done;
- staff untrained in conducting investigations or on legislation they enforce;
- poor inspection practices;
- careless evidence-gathering; and
- failure to involve or educate parents about daycare standards and facilities that are not in compliance with them.

These are some of the details that the Ombudsman's report deals with, and he refers to it as "a legacy of dysfunction" by this government.

For all of us, the disturbing information that government officials ignored numerous complaints shows that this government was failing to protect children. As I said, there is already a system in place. It was not being used. I suggest that we first look at the legislation that is in place and look at what we should be doing.

The government is unfairly attempting to change the rules for families with young children. Bill 10 will, in effect, destroy the child care system that is currently in place and make it difficult for these centres to continue to operate. It also threatens the livelihood of thousands of people and causes unnecessary chaos for families needing to find care.

But Bill 10 does not provide any solutions to the chaos that will ensue when thousands of daycare spaces close, as there will be a vast shortage of licensed centres. Where will children go when their unlicensed centres close? Where is the government's plan for the 80% of Ontario's children who will be forced out? Of course, in turn, will families find themselves having to look at giving up a job in order to look after their children?

Increasing government regulation, according to this proposed piece of legislation, and oversight in existing centres will also mean that child care costs will inevitably soar in order to fund the growing bureaucracy, licensing costs and increased inspections. There are currently thousands of children in unlicensed care. Who will be able to perform those inspections? What infrastructure is in place? Or will we need to create a new system from scratch?

We know that even with the current system, it can take time to have an inspection done. It seems that having more inspectors, at a greater cost, would be the only way to make Bill 10 work. If that's the case, then we're going to be spending more on child care while actually providing less child care. We're spending more on inspectors and the whole infrastructure of a child care bureaucracy, without actually increasing the number of spaces. If there is extra money in the child care fund, then we should be reducing the cost for families.

Ontario families are already struggling to have a two-income household and provide adequate child care for their children. Ontario has the highest child care costs in Canada. According to a 2013 Globe and Mail report, a study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation

and Development indicates that the average monthly costs for infants in Ontario is \$1,100. That's an annual cost of \$13,000. You can think of this as a second mortgage. Child care costs are already extremely high, especially compared with other provinces. Manitoba's, for instance, is \$631. Creating more red tape, more regulations and increasing operating costs for centres in Ontario will only make it more difficult on the pocketbooks of families and business.

Mr. Speaker, in the last five years, I've spoken with hundreds of small businesses, and have heard the horror stories about regulations and red tape. Some businesses have said that they can't keep up with the regulations and costs that it takes to be a small business in Ontario. Some businesses, depending on the industry, must deal with a plethora of agencies, boards and commissions, and meet requirements from all of them. Sometimes the requirements for one are in competition with another.

I used this example the other day when discussing Bill 18, but I think it's a great example. In 2012, the Ontario Home Builders' Association said there were 28 ABCs—agencies, boards and commissions—that home builders have to deal with. How much time do businesses have to deal with all of these ABCs and all the different rules they make? Why is the government making it so difficult for businesses in Ontario to succeed?

If Bill 10 passes, pretty soon a whole new industry—child care centres—will learn how hard it is to deal with more and more government bureaucracy. Who knows how many of these centres will be closed due to the increased red tape, regulations and associated costs?

Not only is business hit with red tape, they also have to worry about payroll taxes, which Bill 10 is sure to add to child care centres, if passed. The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is the most recent payroll tax that the government will be introducing. According to businesses and associations that I have spoken to, the ORPP will inevitably add more expense and reduce profits, and jobs will be lost. Between red tape, regulations and payroll taxes, the government seems to be on the lookout for ways to make running a business in this province more difficult, and I'm struggling to understand why this is.

Bill 10 is going to create another bloated bureaucracy. The problem is that this is looking after something that could have been looked after by the regulations that already exist. Even in the College of Trades, the kind of bureaucracy that has been created and the kind of oversight that has been—is part of that bill. So it looks like another industry, child care centres, is the next in increasing costs for businesses and families.

One of the most important things that I think is a potential fallout from the changes that are being contemplated is what this will do for people who can't meet the requirements, who see having fewer children as something they can't manage. They're going to be looking at doing it on the q.t. Parents are going to be looking for spaces for their children. People are going to be able to offer this, and I think it will only encourage them, when there are such vast numbers of people who are affected, to operate underground.

In fact, once you've produced that level of frustration, that level of inability to pay fees and incur the costs, then the effect of the bill is actually to decrease oversight as more and more seek to provide the service in an underground economy.

1750

My colleague from Simcoe North has called on the minister to consult with daycare providers and families on Bill 10 before rushing to pass it. He has suggested that the bill travel during the winter recess so that we can have a better understanding of its impacts. We have received letters already about how the bill will negatively affect daycare providers and families with young children, but it seems that it would be good for the minister to hear these stories first-hand from the people who have to live with the effects of the bill every day. Families and child care providers should be consulted on this bill so that we ensure that any new legislation will help, not hurt, families and children.

I add my voice to that request because one of the things that is such a dramatic influence on the way in which this bill would be rolled out is whether you are in an urban area or a rural area. In much of the rural areas, there aren't stand-alone daycare centres; there isn't that kind of opportunity for people. People do look to neighbours and friends and people in the community to provide daycare. That unlicensed daycare is an option for people. When it's made more and more difficult for anyone to provide that kind of service, it just reduces the opportunity for people to find that neighbour or that friend; the person who has been doing it in the community for years is no longer able to do so. I think that, apart from the varied voices that come with the process of public hearings, one of the most important voices left out is the small town, where people may not be able to access bigger-scale centres.

The other thing about this legislation is the question of timing. Obviously, thousands and thousands of people are involved, and they need to have time to make adjustments. The people in the business need to know whether or not they can survive, whether there's a business case for them to be able to survive. Families need time to make those adjustments as well. I think that the timing of this legislation is critical for any kind of implementation planning.

As I mentioned a moment ago, the question of the underground economy is one that I think should be viewed very, very carefully because of the fact that when people need to make those kinds of choices and are unable to, they feel that they are ready to take maybe a bigger risk than they otherwise would, but they also feel somewhat desperate. I think there's a lot of good reasons why we need to have the bill travel and hear different points of view.

I think also we need to recognize that no piece of legislation should force families into choices that they would not otherwise make. When it comes to child care, people deserve a choice. There is no one size that fits all. Some prefer an intimate home setting which might not work for others. We must continue to offer families



options so that they can feel comfortable leaving their children in the care of others.

As I said earlier, 80% of children in Ontario today are in those home settings. I think that it's extremely important, when we're looking at this bill, to look at the goals of this bill. They should be clear: a safe, stimulating and affordable experience for our most valuable resource, our babies, and their futures. Instead, this bill throws out to us the spectre of declining spaces and consequent shortages, the increased costs with inspection and bureaucracy and restricted choice for parents. I think that is the danger of this bill, and I certainly want to indicate that we feel that this takes away from the family's ability to choose what type of daycare best suits their lifestyle.

As the Ombudsman's report outlines, the child care system in Ontario must be fixed, but Bill 10 is not the solution.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I adjourn the House, I'll ask if there are any questions and comments.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I wanted to comment on some of the remarks made by the member for York-Simcoe. The term "illegal child care" was actually introduced by the Auditor General. It refers to the situation where an unlicensed child care is contravening the rules that are set out in the Day Nurseries Act, or in the future, hopefully, in Bill 10. It was actually the Auditor General who coined the phrase "illegal child care."

Certainly, the vast majority of providers of unlicensed child care are not behaving in an illegal manner, and they're a valued part of the child care system. In fact, I've frequently used that myself with my own children.

But I do think it's important to point out that the auditor made a number of recommendations, and in fact, Bill 10 addresses those recommendations that the auditor made. What Bill 10 is doing is very, very consistent with what the auditor said. For example, the auditor said, "The Ministry of Education should change its licensing policies to reflect that, absent extenuating or compelling circumstances, individuals who have a history of violating the Day Nurseries Act"—the current legislation—"or successor legislation"—that's Bill 10—"should not be granted a licence to operate under the act."

Well, under Bill 10, if passed, it would prevent an individual from providing child care based on their past conduct, including conviction for an offence under the act. In addition, in the proposed legislation, a director can refuse to issue or renew or revoke a license based on past conduct. So that's an example of something that people have complained about—"You're getting too mean." In fact, we're doing exactly what the auditor, or what the Ombudsman—sorry, I want to correct my record: I kept saying "Auditor General"; I should have been saying "Ombudsman."

We're doing exactly what the Ombudsman said.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Any further questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide a few comments regarding Bill 10. I wasn't going to, but then when the minister stood up—I think I have to. I appreciate what the member for York-Simcoe has said about Bill 10. I, as well, as House leader, have received a letter from our critic, Mr. Dunlop, asking me to ask the government House leader and the third party House leader to have hearings on this bill throughout the province.

There were some significant protests this weekend to Bill 10, and I just can't believe that the minister would stand up and not address what the member for York-Simcoe talked about. It's becoming evident to the members on this side that this bill needs to have some public comment. I know I did an interview this week with one of my smallest weekly newspapers because there is concern out there.

Again, I used this comment last week and I'll use it again today: I think we need to help educate people and not just legislate. We do have tools that are used at our disposal to be able to go out to all corners of the province and engage constituents on this type of legislation. Again, we've seen this government close down debate today on one bill. They're closing down debate on another bill tomorrow. This bill cannot have debate closed. We need to have a discussion with people, and I'm asking again, through you to the minister, to talk to your House leader, listen to what the people are saying, and let's have some hearings on Bill 10.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

I'll return to the member for York-Simcoe for her reply.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you to the Minister of Education and the member for Leeds-Grenville in providing further comment. I tried to make clear in my comments that obviously there are steps that are necessary to take in terms of people who have done something in contravention of the Day Nurseries Act or any of those things, and making sure that what we have at the end of the day is something that is safe and workable.

My concern is more a question of the nature of the member from Leeds-Grenville's, the one-size-fits-all problem, because of the fact that the independent providers that I've met would face a fairly steep cost and measures to take to become part of an agency or something like that. They don't see that as very practical for what they're doing. And as I say, the other problem, with reducing their numbers, is that it reduces choice for families. Since 80% of children are in that kind of a setting, I think it's important to monitor, as the minister said, but I also think it's important to recognize the viability and the need to maintain that kind of service opportunity or choice for families in Ontario.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It's 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 o'clock.  
*The House adjourned at 1802.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
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Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim







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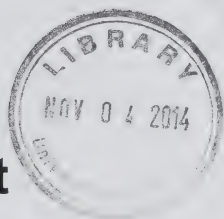
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First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature



## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 28 October 2014

Mardi 28 octobre 2014

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 28 October 2014

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 28 octobre 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION / ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 15, Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government; and,

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Wednesday, November 5, 2014, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 15:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire;

—Witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis;

—Each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members;

—The deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the day of public hearings;

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the committee shall be 1 p.m. on Friday, November 7, 2014.

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 17, 2014, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

On Monday, November 17, 2014, at no later than 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of

the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, November 18, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 6.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm very pleased to be able to participate in this important debate. I look forward to hearing from my honourable colleagues from all parties represented in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, last June the people of this province sent our government back to Queen's Park with a strong mandate. They were clear that they wanted this Legislature to move past the games and grandstanding of the previous Parliament and get down to work. The people of Ontario are expecting us to take action on helping to strengthen our economy, investing in modern infrastructure and supporting our essential services. Our government understands that, and that is why we are committed to having a productive session of this Parliament. We have an ambitious legislative agenda because that is what we believe the people of Ontario deserve.

A key part of this is Bill 15, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, is obvious. I would like to thank Minister Charles Sousa for all his work in bringing this bill forward. I know his ministry



has worked closely with many industry partners to develop the proposed legislation.

Just to provide some context as to how we got here, the proposed Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014, is a combination of two pieces of legislation that died on the order paper. The first, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates, originally introduced on March 4, 2014, went through 10 hours of debate on second reading, and 53 members participated. While at the committee stage, many organizations presented before the committee, including AMAPCEO, the Associated Canadian Car Rental Operators, and the Insurance Brokers Association. The second legislation, the Roadside Assistance Protection Act, 2014, was originally introduced on April 15. Like so many other important pieces of legislation in the previous Parliament, these bills were stalled by the opposition. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that we need to move forward with this bill.

Bill 15 directly stems from the 2013 budget, the government's auto insurance cost reduction strategy and recommendations in the final report of the Honourable Mr. Justice Cunningham to the Minister of Finance regarding the transformation of the auto insurance statutory accident benefits dispute resolution process. If passed, Bill 15 will take action on a number of key initiatives that Ontarians deserve. I believe these initiatives demonstrate that this bill deserves to have a speedy passage.

0910

Bill 15 will transform the dispute resolution system to help injured Ontario drivers settle disputes faster. This will cut down on consumer frustration as well as curb financial and administrative stress on the system, which keeps costs high.

Bill 15 will also reduce the amount of time a vehicle can be stored, accruing charges, after an accident without notice to the driver, from 60 days to a shorter time frame. We'll also provide licence and regulation for, and fight fraud in, the tow truck industry.

Bill 15 will modernize the system for insurance agent and adjuster disciplinary hearings. Streamlining the disciplinary process would support quicker regulatory action against agents and adjusters who are engaging in cost-generating, deceptive and often fraudulent actions.

Bill 15 also proposes a long-overdue measure that would help modernize the auto insurance system. If passed, the legislation would amend the Insurance Act to align the prejudgment interest rate for non-pecuniary loss, also called "pain and suffering damages," for individuals injured in a motor vehicle collision to reflect market conditions.

Our new legislation would further reduce costs, fight fraud and protect consumers.

Mr. Speaker, as I have outlined, Bill 15 would bring much-needed changes to Ontario's auto insurance system. It is the next step in our commitment to keep the system fair and affordable for Ontario drivers.

To provide some background on this type of motion, time allocation was codified in the standing orders in the 1990s, and I well recall those. I think at the time Mr.

David Cooke of the NDP was the one who was responsible for codifying these. He was the House leader at the time. This change in the standing orders allowed the government to put forward a debatable motion that would limit the length of debates on government bills and motions and help speed up passage of key legislation.

A time allocation motion allows for committee time, where the real work happens. As always, the public will have an opportunity to participate through public hearings and written submissions. And the opposition parties are welcome to put forward amendments to strengthen the bill.

Time allocation is one part of the legislative tool kit available and has been used by all three parties here in Ontario. From 1999 to 2003, the last Conservative government time-allocated 60% of its bills.

Although it is our government's preference to allow bills to process through the normal course, these types of motions are from time to time necessary, especially when there are bills from the last Parliament that Ontarians are counting on us to pass.

Voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June: They did not want any more of the stalling of the Legislature by the opposition parties. I urge all members of the House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the deputy House leader for his contribution to the debate. Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Good morning. I just want to make a few comments on the government motion. When I was given the motion last night, it was shortly after we had a similar closure motion on Bill 18. I recalled a quote from a famous baseball player, Yogi Berra, who played in the major leagues for 19 years, but he was known for his Yogiisms.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** "It ain't over till it's over"?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** No, the dean of the Legislature is wrong. It's not "It ain't over till it's over." The one I thought of was, "It's like déjà vu all over again." That was one of Yogi's comments reportedly when he saw Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle hit back-to-back home runs for the Yankees. So it's déjà vu all over again. We've got yet another closure motion by the government.

But before I do make a few comments, we did have a big event yesterday in Ontario. We had the municipal elections. So I want to take this opportunity, because we're in the city of Toronto, to congratulate John Tory on his election as mayor. As most of you know—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you, Minister. Thank you very much for giving him some applause. I think we should congratulate him. I had the pleasure of working with him as a staffer when he was the leader of our party. I wish him well in his next four years as the mayor of this fine city.

I also want to take the opportunity, if members will indulge me, to congratulate some of my local mayors who won election last night. It will only take a moment,

and I do have a few moments. I want to thank and congratulate one of my acclaimed mayors, Herb Scott from the township of Athens. I want to congratulate a new reeve, Doug Malanka, in Augusta township; a new mayor in Edwardsburgh/Cardinal, Mayor Pat Sayeau; an acclaimed mayor in Elizabethtown-Kitley, Jim Pickard; another acclaimed mayor in the Front of Yonge township, Roger Haley; our new mayor in the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Joe Baptista; a new mayor in the village of Merrickville-Wolford, Dave Nash; the re-elected mayor of North Grenville, David Gordon; and the re-elected mayor of the township of Rideau Lakes, Ron Holman. I want to congratulate Robin Jones on her election as the new mayor of the village of Westport. David Henderson was re-elected last night as the mayor of the city of Brockville; congratulations to His Worship Mayor Henderson. Mayor Brett Todd was elected again as the mayor of Prescott. And Erika Demchuk was re-elected as mayor of Gananoque.

I want to thank all of those mayors who won election and all of the members of council who were successful last night. But more importantly, Speaker, as a former municipal politician, I want to thank each and every person for putting their name on the ballot. Running for office is a wonderful opportunity, and I hope that, regardless of the outcome, those who put their name forward last night—I want to thank them. It was great to participate in democracy, and I wish them all the best for their four-year term.

Moving from congratulating local elections to talking to the government about closure motions: I made a few comments yesterday about closure motions, closing off debate. I have to tell you, again, I was very disappointed that we're having, on consecutive days, motions by the government to close and suppress debate. This was one of the bills that the government asked me, as the opposition House leader, to give quick passage to. In fact, they gave us four bills, and then they added a fifth bill. For the most part, Speaker, we were okay with allowing some of those bills to pass with a couple of hours' debate in the Legislature, a few days of committee and back here for third reading.

This bill, in particular, was one I took back to my caucus, and I communicated very clearly to the government House leader that my caucus wanted to have a few days of committee hearings. We felt very strongly, especially given the feedback that we've received from the towing industry, that we should have some public hearings. We should have public hearings in eastern Ontario, south-western Ontario, here in the city of Toronto and also in northern Ontario. I think there was some consensus by some of the members that that was a good thing. So I am disappointed, Speaker, that the government has chosen again to have a closure motion.

I want to put it in perspective. This motion that the deputy House leader, the dean of the Legislature, the member for St. Catharines, the Honourable Jim Bradley, made today, only provides one day of hearings. For the entire province of Ontario, we've got one day, Wednes-

day, November 5, for four hours, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Four hours for a bill—and with, if you read the motion closely, a five-minute presence for each witness and nine minutes for questions. Over that four-hour period, about 16 people will be able to give deputation—16 individuals—and that's it. I don't think it was unreasonable for me, Speaker, to give an opportunity for the government to have some minor travel in the province, to see people in eastern Ontario, in south-western Ontario, here in Toronto and in the north. Five days isn't a lot to ask; I think it's very reasonable.

I was very disappointed yesterday in the debate, when we were debating this bill, because I suggested it to the whip. The chief whip was here. I suggested that he have hearings, and he said something very strange to me. He said something strange. I'll quote from Hansard. This is what the member for Mississauga—Streetsville said: "If you're in the north, if you're in rural Ontario, if you're in the east or if you're anywhere where a deputation isn't occurring, you can still apply to make a deputation to the committee." Here's the quote I want to direct you to: "You can either make it by teleconference from your home, on your telephone, you can use Skype and you can get yourself connected in...." Speaker, this is ridiculous.

**0920**

This is what the government, the chief government whip, is suggesting on how we run deputations. This is a government that wants to govern by Skype and by teleconference. That's what they want. They don't want to have people come to a deputation close to home.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Oh, come on. It's technology—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's right there in Hansard. I know you don't like it. I know you're not happy with it, but it's right here in Hansard. This is what you said yesterday. You said you didn't want to go to the people to hear from them; you didn't want to engage with them.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** That's not true.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It is true. It's right here in black and white.

Governing by Skype and by teleconference is unacceptable on a bill like this—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** He's talking to me so I think I'll quote him.

An even worse comment, Speaker, which was made by the member for Beaches—East York—his quote in Hansard is, now listen to this; it's unbelievable: "We don't have to be taking a whole dog-and-pony show all over the province in order to hear from people when they can call in, or they can send a letter." That's what he said. This isn't a dog-and-pony show, member. Going out and having committee hearings is not a dog-and-pony show. It's an essential part of what we do in this place. Committee work, I suggest, is extremely important. Going out to Ontarians and listening to what they actually want in good public policy is a good thing. You can't say one thing in your throne speech and then do something else once you're here in the Legislature. To make comments referring to committee hearings as a dog-and-pony show



is absolutely ridiculous. It's an insult to the 107 members of this Legislature for one member to refer to a committee hearing as a dog-and-pony show.

I've only been here four and a half years, but I can tell you something: I've been at committee hearings and I find them extremely valuable. I think members who have been here a significant amount of time know how important going out and listening to concerns—especially on a bill that we all know we have stakeholders that have some concerns.

When the government House leader asked me for my comments on five bills, I actually thought he wanted to hear my opinion. When he asked if I could go to my caucus to see if they would give quick passage to these bills, I actually thought he cared. But to have two members yesterday afternoon on debate on Bill 15—when, clearly, speaker after speaker indicate that there are some things that we believe should be discussed in a more comprehensive manner, this is how the government responds: “You can Skype in and tell us what you think. You can call in and tell us what you think.” We're not going to take, as the member said, a dog-and-pony show. That's insulting to refer to it as a dog-and-pony show.

Speaker, I'll tell you, this bill needs to have some discussion. As we all know, by and large, the towing companies, garages and storage yards provide very reputable service. There are some—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Bad operators.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Absolutely. As the member opposite from Scarborough—Agincourt said, there are some bad operators.

We've heard very clearly from some of their associations that they agree in principle with some of the intent of the bill, but there needs to be some discussion. These men and women are small business people and, with all due respect to the people who want to govern by telephone and by Skype, I think it would be a great opportunity for us to take this bill on the road, to try to engage the approximate 1,200 tow truck and vehicle storage operators in Ontario to hear what they have to say. Some 16 or 17 people over four hours: to me, it's not enough. It's not enough. I am insulted that I would be asked for my opinion and then the government just goes ahead and does their business.

Again, I made a joke yesterday that the Premier referred to this place—at least I interpret what she referred to this place as the—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Oh, the Sergeant-at-Arms is coming for the phone.

The government can't say one thing and do something else. They keep pledging transparency and accountability. In the throne speech, there are lots of comments. One of the quotes I gave yesterday, right out of the throne speech—I really think the members, especially the new members on the other side, should listen to it. I want to read it into the record again: “Your government knows that trust is hard-earned, but easily lost. And so it will work each and every day to keep your trust by meeting

its commitments to you.” “Meeting its commitments” to Ontarians doesn't mean that only 16 of you can come to Toronto and make a deputation. It means taking this bill out on the road and discussing it.

On two consecutive days, we've had a closure motion. This is the way, obviously, this government is going to operate. I think it's shameful. Again, to be able to plead about engaging Ontarians as full partners, to say you want to be open and transparent and then to do something completely opposite once you get the opportunity, once you actually engage the opposition, once you ask the NDP and the people in our Conservative caucus what they think, and then when they tell you and when they give you a reasonable suggestion on how to deal with public policy, you just ram it down their throat and you say no, and you make comments that I think are really negative to this whole process. I happen to think that committees and discussions on public policy are great opportunities for us. I think most Ontarians want that from their government and want that from their opposition.

The other thing I want to make sure that I put on the record is some of the quotes from some of the mandate letters that the government made such great fanfare about publishing online. I encourage members of the public to go online and look at these mandate letters for each and every minister. Some of the quotes that are there are almost laughable now because of the fact that this government, on consecutive days, wants to stifle debate, wants to shut down debate on two bills.

Here's a quote from one of the mandate letters: “We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country.” I suggest that there's no possible way you are going to be the most open and transparent government when you operate using standing order 47 to close and stifle debate and you then look at people and say, “You're going to have to call in on Skype if you want to engage us.”

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** If you have Skype.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** If you have Skype.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** If you have the bandwidth.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** If you have Internet. Yes, if you're in a rural area and don't have good high-speed Internet, you won't be able to do much Skyping.

Here's another quote from a mandate letter: “It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.” I think one of the members may want to rethink the action he took yesterday when he called the committee system a dog-and-pony show. I think we need to be accountable for every action we take, and I hope at some opportunity perhaps they can deal with that. You can't lead, you can't be an activist, you can't deal in moderation as a government, and then put the hammer down every single time we in the opposition say, “We want to take a few hours back from the process to talk to Ontarians.”

I happen to think that I'm a pretty easy guy to get along with. I think of my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. When we're in a meeting and we're negotiating on behalf of our caucus, I think we're pretty fair and reasonable. I think we're open to suggestions, but you know what? Don't ask us for our suggestions and then totally ignore us when we're being reasonable.

0930

To table five bills and to say that two of those five bills should have more than 16 people appearing as a delegation—I think we're being pretty reasonable. I don't think that's an outlandish request, to have a few days of committee travel here or there to actually hit some of the corners of the province, to actually listen to people.

My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke quoted one of the sayings that is here in this chamber, *Audi alteram partem*, which means, "Hear the other side." All we're asking is that you hear the other side. Allow public comment on your policy. Don't be afraid of engaging people. Don't live in the bubble at Queen's Park. Get out of the city of Toronto and talk to people.

I know that my colleague and others have some things to say. I just want to thank you for the opportunity to speak. I hope some of the members on the other side will acknowledge that they made some wrong comments, and that they speak to their government House leader and their House administration over there and not govern by closure motion. Don't get caught in the trap of stifling debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I find it absolutely incredible to believe that I have been back at Queen's Park—we have all been back at Queen's Park—for all of five days. Today is day 6 that all 107 MPPs, some of them newly elected, are back at Queen's Park. And five days into the job we get closure motions. This is the second closure motion and we've barely been back at work.

The election is not that far away. If I heard it once, I heard it a thousand times: The Liberal government was going to be open, transparent and respectful of democracy. And what do we get? Five days into the job they shut down debate. Five days into the job they say, "We have heard you enough."

Democracy is supposed to be giving the people a voice. This is what our system is all about. We don't have tyranny. We don't have a dictatorship in Ontario. We have a democracy. And a democracy is that you make sure that the people you represent have an opportunity to be heard; they have an opportunity to speak; they have an opportunity to share. But none of this is being respected.

Five days into the job, they're saying, "We have heard you enough. Democracy was a fine idea to get elected, but now that we are elected, really, we've heard you enough. We, the Liberals, know what is good for all of the province." They don't have to listen to the people of Nickel Belt or the people throughout Ontario. They know what's good for us.

I disagree with that. I've never had an opportunity to talk to this bill, yet of the 33 beautiful little communities that I represent, from Biscotasing to Shining Tree, to Westree, to Gogama, to Beaver Lake—it doesn't matter where I go—there are always people who come to me because they have issues with their auto insurance.

We have a bill in front of us that is titled the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act. The problem is that the "fighting fraud" part of the bill leads us to believe that it is us, the good people of Ontario, the drivers of Ontario, who are the people defrauding the system. But this is not what I hear when I'm in my riding. This is not what I hear at all.

I would like to give you the example of Mr. Bill Mason. Bill won't have an opportunity to come down and tell his story because the closure motion gives you all of one day to come to the hearing; and if that day happens to be the day you have therapy back in Nickel Belt, the chance to come down here to tell your story is completely gone. They don't want to hear from the good people of Nickel Belt. The Liberals already know it all. The Liberals already know what's good for us and refuse to listen to us.

I will try to tell the story that Bill Mason would have very much wanted to come and talk to this committee about—he and his son Shawn. Mr. Mason had a catastrophic accident and has been severely disabled ever since. He has had nothing but a hard time with his insurance company, the Dominion of Canada General Insurance Company. It has been an ongoing fight to get him anything from an hour of physiotherapy so that he could walk to an hour of speech therapy so that he could speak or an hour of occupational therapy so that he can dress himself and go about his activities and daily life.

Mr. Mason has been asked—not asked, really; told—by his insurance company that he must submit to this and this and that other assessment. The assessments that his own family physician, the physiotherapist, the occupational therapist, the speech pathologist at our hospital in Sudbury where he was treated after his accident—all of them apparently knew nothing. He had to be reassessed by some physiotherapist, occupational therapist and physician with the same qualifications, coming from the same college, but they come up from down south to do the assessment.

It's rather interesting that through freedom of access of information at FSCO, we were able to find out that when you ask, as Bill Mason did, for a reassessment, you are limited to a maximum of \$450 to \$900. This is the maximum you can pay to have a reassessment to argue your case against the insurance company that says, "No, you're all fine. Although you can't walk, can't speak and can't dress yourself, life is supposed to be a champion, and you don't need the help of your auto insurance." But when the auto insurance did their assessment to say that he did not need care, they paid out \$5,350. Funny how the maximum is applied when the patient wants a reassessment, but when the insurance company wants a reassessment, money is no object.



Then, again through freedom of access of information, we started to look into where this money was coming from. You see, the Insurance Bureau of Canada tells you how the premium that we pay for auto insurance is to be spent. The bureau recommends that 53.1% of every dollar we pay go to policyholder claims. So 53% of the money we pay is supposed to be paid back into claims; 10.5% goes to profit—not a bad gig if you can get it if you compare this to what I’m getting on my return on investment; 15.9% is apparently for taxes; and 20.5 cents of every dollar is for operating and regulatory costs. That is important, because the 20.5% of operating and regulatory costs is the cost for the insurance company to do things. But when we started to look at where the money was coming from, we realized that some of the money that had been used to assess and reassess so that they could deny him any kind of support and care was not being billed to the operating and regulatory costs; it was coming out of his claim account. It was coming out of what is basically the money that was supposed to be used for his care. This is what we call improper coding practice by auto insurance.

I come from a health care background. I’m a physiotherapist by profession. I have dealt with many, many victims of auto insurance. When we brought that forward to FSCO, and I—not “we”; certainly my constituents did, but so did I—and said, “You know the fraud that you’re talking about? It’s not always the little guy who pretends to have whiplash when he doesn’t. Sometimes it’s actually the auto insurers who are not coding stuff properly. They are coding operating costs as claim costs.” The claim cost is the money that you have for your care.

**0940**

Not only were they doing that—again, through freedom of access to information and hours and hours and hours to try to make sense of the documents that were shared with us, because they made sure that they blacked out enough parts to make it impossible to read—but we were able to show that they had hired a private investigator to spy upon Mr. Mason’s activities so that they could use this to deny him his claim.

Do you know where those expenses were billed? Could you, in any way possible, imagine a private investigator providing care to Mr. Mason? Well, this is where it was coded and this is where it was billed. It was not billed to the operating costs of the insurance company. It was billed into his claim cost, which by then had gone down to zero, which means he was not able to get any help whatsoever. To me, this looks like fraud.

Do people make mistakes? Yes, I’ll be the first one to say that people do make mistakes, and maybe it was just a clerk someplace who made an error and coded this to the claim rather than coding this to operations. But we have a system of oversight in Ontario so that this kind of stuff doesn’t happen. Once the coding is gone, it goes to FSCO, which stands for—I never remember what it stands for—the Financial Services Commission of Ontario. The Financial Services Commission of Ontario is supposed to oversee this to make sure it does not happen.

First, I figure, “It’s just a coding mistake. We’re all human beings. Human beings all make mistakes. It doesn’t matter where you work.” But then three more were able to file freedom-of-access-to-information requests, again through FSCO. A pile of impossible-to-read documents came. I sat down in Mr. Mason’s kitchen and went through piles and piles of paper. I have to say great thanks to his son Shawn, who spent many, many, many hours sifting through those documents that we got.

The other three freedom-of-access-to-information requests for three other independent accidents—and they were not all from the insurance company that Mr. Mason had dealt with. One was from the same; the other two were from two other different insurance companies. You know what? We found coding errors in all four of them, where it looks like the claims that people are being paid out to help them recuperate and help them gain access to therapy and health care services so that they can get back into their lives, back at work, back into their families—those claims keep going up and up; absolutely. But all the money is not going to the clients. All the money is not being used to help them regain. Some of the money is being used for things—it doesn’t matter how creative you are; you cannot make a private investigator part of a health care team. I’ve been in the business long enough to know that we’ve never needed the help of a private investigator to get somebody back on their feet, walking, able to dress themselves and feed themselves or speak. They have no role to play in a circle of care. They are there to deny legitimate policyholders the care that they need.

But Mr. Mason will never have an opportunity to share his story because the government has decided that there will be one day of hearings, and that happens to be a day that he is not able to travel from Nickel Belt all the way down here to Queen’s Park. This makes it especially unfair for people who come from far.

For a lot of the people that I represent, be it in Ivanhoe Lake, in Bisco or in Foleyet, there is no way to get down here and back home in one day. The opportunity for those people to come means coming down the day before, doing the hearings, and getting back home sometimes late into the night, when the moose and all the big animals are walking our highways at the risk of your life. Those people would like to be heard, but five days into our new session, the opportunity to be heard has been taken away.

So when I saw and when I found out what was happening with some of the claims of people in my riding, I went and saw the Minister of Finance—it was Dwight Duncan at the time—because he is responsible for FSCO. He had no interest in hearing what I had to say. He was rude to me and basically said, “You voted against the budget. Why should I help you?” I said, “Well, you don’t have to help me. How about you make sure that FSCO does its job of looking at how the different services are coded into the insurance industry?” He brushed me away. He didn’t want anything to do with me.

I don’t give up easy, so I went and saw the Auditor General. It was Jim McCarter at the time. So I went and

talked to Jim and showed him that I am extremely grateful to the Auditor General that did look into the insurance industry, and I will quote: "... the people of Ontario are paying auto insurance premiums that are higher than anywhere in Canada" and he suspects "something fishy is going on as the costs of claims continue to climb—even though accidents have decreased."

In his report, which the government used for part of the reason why we have this bill in front of us, he does not only point the finger at people defrauding the auto industry; he also points the finger at FSCO and he also points the finger at the insurance companies. Do we see any of that in that bill? None whatsoever. When we point the finger at fighting fraud, we are pointing the finger at policyholders like you and I, Speaker, who drive a car in Ontario. If you live in Nickel Belt, you can wait for a bus for a very long time because it's not going to come. The only way to get around in Nickel Belt is to have a car, which means we all have auto insurance, which means we have all been pointed at by the Liberal government as frauding. But a lot of us are not.

How about FSCO not doing their job of making sure that the coding is done properly? How about the auto insurers who miscode the expenses that they do on behalf of policyholders? None of this will be looked at. None of this will have an opportunity to be heard, because they've decided that they have heard from Ontarians enough.

Je ne peux pas vous dire comment j'étais déçue quand j'ai entendu dire que ce gouvernement libéral était pour imposer le bâillon. Imposer le bâillon, c'est quelque chose qu'on entend au niveau fédéral tout le temps. M. Harper, il adore ça. Lui, il n'a pas besoin de regarder ce qui se passe. Mais quand les libéraux étaient en train de faire cabale et faire campagne dans les dernières élections, pour eux autres, on a entendu parler de démocratie, de transparence, d'imputabilité. Ça, c'était au moins 10 fois par jour à tous les jours. Ça ne finissait pas.

Maintenant qu'on est retourné en Chambre, maintenant que ça fait cinq grosses journées qu'on est retourné en Chambre, ils imposent le bâillon. Ils ne veulent pas écouter les Ontariens et Ontariennes. Ils ne veulent pas écouter l'opposition non plus. Ils pensent qu'ils ont la vérité avec un grand V, puis ils savent où ils s'en vont et ils n'ont pas besoin de nous.

On est dans une démocratie. Une démocratie, ça veut dire que les gens ont le droit de s'exprimer, ont le droit d'être entendus et ont le droit de faire partie du processus législatif. Quand on regarde ce qu'on a devant nous en ce moment, c'est le contraire sur toute la ligne.

0950

Ça fait cinq jours qu'on est ici. Ça fait deux motions de bâillon qu'on a, deux motions qui nous disent : « On a assez entendu parler de vous. On ne veut plus en entendre parler. »

Mais pour moi qui représente les gens de Nickel Belt, ça veut dire qu'il y a plusieurs des gens que je représente qui n'auront jamais la chance de venir parler au gouvernement pour leur dire : « On a une opportunité de

faire des changements qui amélioreraient les choses, qui diminueraient les primes et qui assureraient qu'on a un système transparent et imputable. » Ils n'auront jamais la chance de faire ça parce qu'on leur a dit qu'on les a assez entendus. On leur a dit que le gouvernement libéral a écouté tout ce qu'il y avait à écouter en cinq grosses journées en Chambre et pour deux projets de loi on impose le bâillon. On ne veut plus vous entendre. Eux ont la vérité avec un grand V et ils ne veulent plus nous écouter.

Ça, c'est vraiment dommage. C'est vraiment inconcevable et ce n'est pas acceptable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Normally I begin by saying, "It's a pleasure to join this debate this morning," but it's anything but. Yesterday we debated a time allocation motion here in the House, and I must say that I expressed some anger about what the government was doing so early into this session—some anger in that this would be the tactic they would take on, as my colleague from Nickel Belt says, day 5. Monday was day 5. Yesterday was day 5, and they immediately brought in a time allocation motion. It's pretty disappointing.

Before I get into that this morning, I do want to talk a little bit about the municipal elections, as everybody has this morning, with respect to my own riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I must say, I don't even have all the results. Some of them are coming in a little slowly, or maybe it's just me. Of course, I congratulate my former leader John Tory on winning the mayoralty race in Toronto last night. It was quite a tremendous voter turnout, which shows there was a lot of interest in that election. Although how could there not be? I think they had 12,467 debates during that election. I don't know how in the name of God they managed that. We have a few debates during a provincial campaign and find that pretty stressful at times. I don't know how those candidates managed—at least three of them. You realize there were 65 candidates for mayor on the ballot in the city of Toronto? Not all are quite as well known as Mr. Tory, Mr. Ford and Ms. Chow. But I do congratulate John, and I'm sure that he'll bring the experience and the dedication that he's brought to every other position that he has held in life to the mayor's office in Toronto. I wish him well and look forward to working with him.

Now, back home in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke it was quite a night as well. There have been some changes in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I want to congratulate and thank everyone who put their name up, as I always do to anyone who does put their name up for public office. It's a daunting decision to make, and for those who make that decision, I congratulate them and thank them for being involved in the democratic process.

Let's just go through the list. In Admaston/Bromley we have a new mayor in Michael Donohue; in Laurentian Valley, a new mayor in Steve Bennett; in Laurentian Hills, a new mayor in John Reinwald; in Madawaska Valley, a new mayor in Kim Love; in Whitewater, a new



mayor in Hal Johnson and a new reeve in Terry Millar; in the city of Pembroke, a new mayor in Mike LeMay; in Head, Clara and Maria, a new mayor in Jim Gibson; in Deep River, a new mayor in Joan Loughheed; in North Algona Wilberforce, a new mayor in Deborah Farr; in the town of Renfrew, a new mayor in Don Eady; in the township of Horton, a new mayor in Bob Kingsbury; in Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan, a new mayor in Garry Gruntz; and in the township of McNab-Braeside, a new mayor in Tom Peckett. I don't have all the results from some of the other communities; I have 17 municipalities, not including the city of Pembroke, in my riding.

So it was quite an interesting night. I didn't get all of the results but I congratulate all of the winners, and I look forward to working with them and their councils over the next four years. I thank all of the mayors who have either been defeated or have left on their own accord and did not run for re-election at this time.

I want to talk about one mayor in particular—I expect I'll be doing a statement later this week—Mayor Jack Wilson, the retiring mayor in Laurentian Valley. I was at a function on Friday night. It was the wardens' banquet, but also it was a retirement do for Jack Wilson, who has served in public elected office for 50 consecutive years. That does not happen very often. I think it has happened four times in the history of the province of Ontario. It is my personal prediction that it will never happen again. Those days have long passed. You should have to get into this business pretty early and stay pretty late in order to serve 50 years. I will be talking about Mr. Wilson and the kind of unbelievable gentleman he was, and is, at another time.

To the business at hand: My colleague, our House leader, from Leeds–Grenville, talked about—and I can't resist it either because he mentioned Yogi Berra. Lawrence “Yogi” Berra of the New York Yankees, a three-time most valuable player in the major leagues, had some sayings such as, “You come to a fork in the road, take it.” He was an axiomatic sort of person. Another one was, “It ain't over till it's over.” But one of the ones he's most famous for, and I know my colleague said it, was: “It's déjà vu all over again.” Those are some of the sayings Yogi Berra was famous for, and he was pretty famous for being one heck of a catcher as well.

It's like déjà vu all over again because this nightmare that we lived yesterday, we're reliving today. This appears to be the way that this—they think they've got the greatest mandate in the history of electoral politics in the province of Ontario. They think that the Wynne government now has this unbelievable mandate. They keep getting up and saying, “We got a very clear message on June 12 that the people want us to proceed with our agenda.”

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Except in Windsor.

**Mrs. Jennifer K. French:** And Oshawa.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Mrs. Gretzky and Ms. French, from Windsor and Oshawa, disagree. They disagree, and they have the right to disagree because they won ridings that were previously held by Liberal members.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** And Joe.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And Joe Cimino up in Sudbury, yes.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Conservative.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Right. Sorry, Ms. French. I forgot that was one of ours. Let's move on now from that one. But thanks for pointing that out to me.

It wasn't like they got this marvellous mandate on their agenda. We all know what happened in the election, and I really don't want to talk about it anymore. I'm writing a book, so I don't want to tip my hand as to what the book is going to say.

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They keep saying that they've got this carte blanche, blank cheque from the people of Ontario to do as they wish because the people voted for that in the election. That's just hokey. Come on. It's just baloney. People don't go in behind that curtain and say, “Oh, I really want to vote for this government because I want to make sure they bring in time allocation on the insurance bill and the towing bill.”

Let's talk about the bill. Even if they do want to say they had a mandate, prior to the election that was two bills. They've now moulded two bills into one. The insurance fraud bill was one and the towing bill was another, but now they've amalgamated them into one. We've not got a lot of problems with the insurance bill. My colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London has talked eloquently about that in the last Parliament, and my colleague from Nipissing spoke about it yesterday. We have some problems where we think we could have made it a lot stronger, and many of the amendments that my colleagues proposed would have made this bill a lot stronger. However, bringing the towing part into it is a big problem.

In my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—and you can get those stats from the Insurance Bureau of Canada if you want—we have one of the lowest claim records per 1,000 people and population anywhere in the province. I believe that our drivers in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke are the best, and I count myself among them.

That's part of it. But do you know what really is great about the people in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke? They don't lie and they don't cheat. Our fraud numbers are next to zero. Why would the insurance bill target us the same as everyone else? Fraud is a big problem in Ontario; we know that.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** So let's pass some rules.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** If you pass a rule, you'll find some shady characters finding a way to break that rule for their own material gain. That's what is happening in other areas of the province. The tow truck business here in the GTA: That is organized crime. Let's not kid ourselves here. That is run by the bikers and that is run by low-lives who are looking for every opportunity to line their pockets by taking advantage of vulnerable people who may have broken down or had a minor accident on the highway.

I know people who've had a minor accident on the highway and they're besieged like vultures on a dead zebra on the savannah. Woof; down they come. Where do they come from? It's like they have been flying around waiting for their prey. There they are, pouncing on them—a minor fender-bender: "You can't drive that car. We'll have to tow that." Almost in your face, intimidating people, saying, "We're taking your car." "Where does that car go afterwards?" is a good question because, the next thing you know, you don't even know where your car is. You find it three weeks later and you've got a bill that's higher than the mortgage you've got left on your home.

Was there a need to bring in legislation? No question about it; absolutely. But the legislation is the shotgun approach where they're just tarring everybody with the same brush. They're bringing in legislation, for example, where there will be specific charges for specific calls.

Speaker, I want to draw this little picture. A car breaks down on the 401. You require a tow truck to back up to it, hook it up and take it to a garage to have it repaired. Okay? But they want to pay the same amount for a car that goes down into a 100-foot ravine in Renfrew county in the middle of the winter, and it isn't paved down in that ravine. It's rocks; uneven. You want a tow truck operator to shimmy down there with a cable, hook up that car and try and winch it out slowly, minimizing any further damage, and they want to pay that tow truck driver the same amount they pay a tow truck driver for hooking up that car on the side of the road. Any fool can see the difference. The tow truck drivers in my riding came to see me about that. That's just one illustration. We've raised that issue with the minister. They didn't want anything to do with it. They didn't accept any amendments on this.

So now, here's their opportunity, my tow truck drivers from—you know where I live? It's not around the corner. There's no train service coming to Toronto from Renfrew county. There's no plane service coming to Toronto from Renfrew county. It's get onto that highway and start driving. They want my people to come down and have that opportunity, maybe, to speak to the bill.

However, it's limited opportunity, Speaker: committee 1 to 3 p.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. on November 5, 2014. Oh, witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. It's like a buffet that they don't bring out enough food to. If you're farther back in the line, you're going home hungry. These folks, what's their chance of beating somebody who lives here in the city of Toronto to the punch? What's their chance? Pretty darned slim.

This is the government's way of stifling our people, taking away their opportunity to speak to the bill. So what do they do? They bring in a time allocation motion. And they think this is just great. They think it's just great because everybody has the opportunity. Well, the notice will go out—one of the members says they can write a letter. Write a letter? Write a letter, get it here to Toronto and have somebody read it? Have you ever sent a letter to the government?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, I know; if you get a reply within six years, you're doing well. It's just unbelievable.

The member from Mississauga—is it Mississauga—Streetsville? Whatever; he'll be up for a point of order shortly. Don't worry. He says that anyone who wants to make a deputation—this is his quote from Hansard yesterday: "If you're in the north, if you're in rural Ontario, if you're in the east or if you're anywhere where a deputation isn't occurring, you can still apply to make a deputation to the committee. You can either make it by teleconference from your home, on your telephone, you can use Skype and you can get yourself connected in, or we'll arrange for you to go to another place where you can sit down in front of a camera and give your deputation."

I'm just wondering if the people from Quadeville are going to feel that's a good option for them. You see, he needs to get out of Mississauga more often. I understand he's been to MaRS, but he needs to get up to Renfrew county perhaps and see what life in the real world is like.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Especially for a PA for agriculture, food and rural affairs.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The PA for agriculture, food and rural affairs—that's not him. That's the member for Beaches—East York.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Oh, that's who I was looking at.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, I know—Beaches—East York. He had a predecessor here, Michael Prue from Beaches—East York, who probably understood committee as well as anybody and understood the value of committee. But here's what the newly-elected member for Beaches—East York has to say about committee—

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** What did he say?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm going to tell you right now. He says, "We don't have to be taking a whole dog-and-pony show all over the province in order to hear from people when they can call in, or they can send a letter. Already, clearly, they're communicating with the members in the House."

Well, I say to the member from Beaches—East York, the next time he's at committee: Are you dressing up as a dog or a pony? I would love to see that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I apologize to the ponies—oh, I withdraw.

Speaker, I am going to conclude very shortly and leave some time for the member from Elgin—Middlesex—London. But I just want the people to understand that this is completely against the grain of what this government promised. They promised to work with opposition. They promised to consult.

**1010**

You know, I'll say this for Dalton McGuinty—and I know a lot of those people over there owe their seats to Dalton McGuinty. I don't happen to agree with everything Dalton McGuinty did; in fact, I disagree with a lot



of it. But I'll tell you one thing: When he was in government here, we did travel on committee.

All we've asked for with this bill is two days of travel throughout the province of Ontario: two days, perhaps one in northern Ontario and one in rural Ontario—two days of committee across this province, and we are not even being given that, because this government wants to shut down debate and stifle anybody who might bring an idea for improvement to this piece of legislation. Shame on them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, I'm glad that I can contribute to this debate on Bill 15 to fight insurance fraud and reduce auto rates.

I'm particularly concerned about this bill because it was originally brought to the House, and now we're reintroducing it and going through it again, but it seems like an awfully thick bill, and when I look at the bill, the first 23 pages are all about towing fraud. That's a lot of pages to go through for the average person to get to a section—actually a very important section—that is going to affect the insured once this bill has passed. Not a lot of members have actually talked about that specific section that's going to impact the coverage and the process of how to get those coverages when you're in a car insurance accident.

So that was interesting, how we're all focusing—the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke focused on the towing section of the bill, but the biggest impact that's going to happen as far as litigation and the rights of someone who is injured in a car accident is on page 23. It's 23 pages into this bill before you get to what's really going to matter to the average person.

The towing cost is absolutely going to be a part of that whole structure of how to manage the way the towing system operates so that it can be serving consumers better—absolutely. But to put it at the beginning, to me, kind of shows the priority of where the insurance fraud is—should be on page 23, first and foremost.

Originally, this whole topic of auto insurance rates and people being charged too much and the fact that people are struggling to make ends meet and afford everyday bills and everyday life was brought to light in this House, in a minority government situation, by our member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. He's my seatmate in this session. He brought to light, in a minority government, this issue, and he fought hard to make this minority government understand the importance of the changes that were made in 2010 to the accident benefits coverage for insureds. They were cut in half in 2010, and at the time people were then supposed to purchase additional coverage. They were to top up what the original accident benefits had changed from. That meant that they were going to pay more for extra coverage they originally had.

The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton made a very good point. He made a very good case for the fact that this meant that insurance companies were going to save a lot of money. They tell us that where their expenses come from, out of the premiums that they get, is mostly

with regard to claims, and a lot of it through injury claims. So they brought a bill forward, the changes that happened in 2010, to reduce the coverage when you're hurt in a car accident—how much you can collect for rehab, how much you can have for attendant care, how much you can have for income replacement when you're home because you can't work—and you had to top all of those up, and that cost you more.

One thing we keep forgetting, Speaker, is that insurance is very confusing for the average person—very confusing. If you have a good broker or a good agent who is going to go through it with you section by section, you're a very lucky consumer. You have to sometimes be patient enough to go through it section by section because it's a long conversation to describe it. A lot of things changed. A lot of your benefits got reduced, and nobody knew.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would thank the speaker.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Since it is now 10:15, this House is recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

#### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear yellow ribbons in memory of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who will be honoured today with a regimental funeral in his hometown of Hamilton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent. Do we agree? Agreed.

#### WEARING OF CARNATIONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Nickel Belt on a point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent to wear a carnation for the MS Society Day at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** So that's what it was. The member from Nickel Belt is seeking unanimous consent to wear the carnation. Do we agree? Agreed. Thank you.

Now it's time for introduction of guests.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm so happy to have a couple of my constituents here today with the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. They're just behind me in the public galleries. I'd like to welcome, from the city of Brockville, Betty Hogeterp, and from Gananoque, Diane Batchelor. Ladies, welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** It's an exciting day in the Legislature. Today is the annual Meet the Miners gathering, a tradition since 1978. I want to introduce some very special guests we have in the east gallery: John Mullally, director of corporate affairs for Goldcorp; Paul Martin, president and CEO of Detour Gold; Phil du Toit, president and CEO of North American Palladium; Scott Yarrow, vice-president of sustainability for Glencore; Peter McBride, the manager of communications for the Ontario Mining Association; and Cory McPhee, the vice-president of corporate affairs for Vale. Welcome, everyone. It's going to be a great day.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to introduce members of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada: Michael Roche, in his 12th year of volunteering with the MS Society, Andrea Strath and Donna Czukar; and also Betty Barber from the nurse practitioners. She's from the great city of Owen Sound in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I have visitors here from Algoma–Manitoulin today. I have Irene Breckon, who is the grandmother of both Katey and Emily Krauss. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm very pleased to welcome the nurse practitioners here with us this morning, but I also want to shout out to Claudia, a U of T grad from nursing school. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I would like to welcome our friend Terri MacDougall from North Bay, who is here with the nurse practitioners.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** I'd like to join in welcoming a number of representatives of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada who are joining us today: Joanne Ticknor, Gaby Mammone, Yonit Fuhrmann, Andrea Strath and Michael Roche. Welcome.

I also want to take a minute to welcome Manoj Fernandes and Joanne D'Souza. Manoj is the father and Joanne is the cousin of page captain Darren Fernandes. They're in the members' gallery. Welcome.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I have a number of ladies from the nurse practitioners' association who are here today, and they're from different parts of the province: Chantelle Hart from Peterborough, Donna Kearney from Muskoka, Linda Kowitz from Parry Sound, Leanna Lefebvre from Muskoka, Lia Kutzscher from Muskoka, and Tina Lesk from Orillia. I wish everybody will give them a warm welcome here today.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I also wanted to welcome the Meet the Miners today. We're going to be meeting up with quite a few of our delegations today, and we're looking forward to meeting you at your reception tonight.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to welcome nurse practitioner Hoda Mankal, who practises at Carlington Community Health Centre, which is located in my riding of Ottawa Centre.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'd like to also welcome to Queen's Park today Jennifer Blackhall and Betty Barber. They represent the Clinton Family Health Team.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I too want to welcome nurse practitioners Claudia, from the family health team

in Pickering, as well as her colleagues Jill from Sudbury and Stephanie from Oshawa. Welcome.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I just want to recognize the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, who put on a great informative breakfast here this morning. We want to thank them for all their great works for primary care in Ontario.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** As the parliamentary assistant to Minister Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I would like to introduce two of my senior staff who are in the east gallery with the other members from our great mining industry, and they are Laura Oliver, my EA, and Lynette Flannigan, my MA. I have both of them here today.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to introduce to Queen's Park nurse practitioner Jennifer Clement: I must say—I want to add to this—the best-ever nurse practitioner. She is part of the first-ever nurse practitioner-led clinic in the Sudbury clinic, and she is here today, as well as Rochelle Hatton. Rochelle also practises in my riding, in Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, in Sagamok. Welcome to both of them. They came from far to be with us today.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** A few introductions for me: first of all, a nurse practitioner from Thunder Bay, Aaron Medd. Welcome to Aaron. And there are a couple of others from my office here in Toronto, Navneet Singh, and a long-serving assistant of mine from Thunder Bay who has been serving the constituency of Thunder Bay–Atikokan very capably for a very long time—in the members' west gallery—Sharla Knapton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** On behalf of the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, the MPP for Don Valley West, we would like to acknowledge that the page captain today is Alex Wolf. Joining us today are his mother, Margot Wolf, father John Wolf, grandmother Betty Ann Findlay and aunt Jean Halpenny. They'll be in the public gallery this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** I want to welcome Debbie Greystone, a nurse practitioner from Sault Ste. Marie, who was instrumental in setting up one of the first nurse practitioner clinics in Ontario.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I'd like to introduce Jeff Mole from Parry Sound and Muskoka, who is joining us today. Welcome.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I too would like to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, who are here today at Queen's Park for their lobby day. Ontario's 2,000 nurse practitioners provide critical and essential care for our province. In particular, I'd like to recognize Gillian Graham, a nurse practitioner from my riding. Welcome.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I'd like to introduce some wonderful nurse practitioners who are visiting Queen's Park today: Shirlee O'Connor, Shirley Strachan-Jackman, and a resident of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Sandra Tully.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to welcome the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists here this morning. We have Laurie Warren, who is the



president of the OSOT; Christie Brenchley, the executive director; and Diane McLaughlin, director.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I am delighted to welcome nurse practitioner Karen Antoni. She is from St. Joe's hospital in Hamilton. We had a great informative discussion this morning.

I too would like to recognize the Wolf family, that they are parents of Alex Wolf. Although they are in the Premier's riding, they are my neighbours across the street at the cottage in Southampton, so: Nice to see you.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm very pleased that we have representatives from Whitesand First Nation in the great riding of Thunder Bay—Superior North, including Chief Allan Gustafson of Whitesand First Nation; Craig Toset, business development officer; and David Mackett, community and resource development officer.

Let me also introduce Tammy Laws, who very capably looks after our minister's office in Thunder Bay. Welcome to all of you.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It gives me great pleasure to recognize Chrissy Orr here with Neil McNeil school—welcome—with the secondary school teachers.

I also have Tim Progosh. Tim is here as a constituent. He's the founder of the Canadian Comedy Awards, and he is a coach of the Malvern Black Knights. They're now 5-0.

1040

I'd also like to recognize Christina Ganev, who's here with East York Collegiate Institute—welcome; nice to see you here—and a couple of nurse practitioners: Jane MacIver, who's a constituent, and Donna Kearney, who has helped establish a Dorset nurse practitioner school up by my mom's cottage.

Thank you all. Welcome.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to welcome to the Legislature here today the nurse practitioners from Kingston and the Islands. I'm so pleased to have you here. I enjoyed our conversation that we had in the office. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You'll notice that I did exercise a little bit of leeway in terms of introductions, but I do want to come back to all members and ask—almost beg—that in order for us to have all of our guests acknowledged, which I think is important, I'm going to remind you that I request that you just simply introduce them and save the other comments for either members' statements, ministers' statements, or during your two-minuters or whatever. This process is effective if we do it that way. I would seek your co-operation in simply making the introduction. Don't go into explanations in depth, please.

I thank you for your patience in allowing us to introduce our guests, because everyone is a special guest here in this House. I thank you for that co-operation.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### RING OF FIRE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'd like to start question period off today by congratulating all municipal campaigns yesterday for a fine display of democracy. Also, I'd like to extend my congratulations to three former members of this assembly who won in three of Ontario's major cities. In my own home city, former cabinet minister Jim Watson was re-elected. In Brampton, a great cabinet minister, Linda Jeffrey, was elected. I congratulate her. And of course, on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservatives, our former leader, John Tory, is the new mayor of Toronto.

My first question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The Ring of Fire should be a beacon of economic growth and prosperity not just for northern Ontario but for all Ontarians. Now, under this Liberal government, it risks going up in smoke.

Over the past decade, I've heard countless ministers assure us that they would rebuild this. Why does this government say one thing in their budget about the Ring of Fire and do another thing day-to-day to compromise its success?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** There's no question that our government is very much leading the way in terms of the development of the Ring of Fire. Particularly over the past year and, may I say, over the last six months, we've made very significant progress.

We have put in place the Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corp., something that will be tasked with bringing forward all the partners that can make transportation infrastructure decisions that obviously need to be made so that the project can move forward.

We have committed \$1 billion to the transportation infrastructure, something that neither of those parties across the floor supported, which we put through in this summer's budget. That is something that indeed we would love to have your support on—let alone the fact that the federal government should be joining us in matching those particular dollars.

May I say—

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you so much. Let me say also that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to ask the member from Renfrew to come to order.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The fact of the matter is, we have lost jobs in Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Toronto as a result of inaction by your government—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Government Services, come to order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** —as a result of Cliffs pulling out a massive investment in our north.

Among the many reasons for the ongoing failures of the projects in the Ring of Fire is the lack of agreements that have been settled upon between the Liberal government here and First Nations. According to the Globe and Mail last month, in September Cliffs cited that the suspension of the project was due to numerous delays and difficult discussions with the provincial government, including the First Nations communities, who have also said that they have scolded you for ignoring their interests with the new development corporation.

The government talk a good game about economic development, infrastructure renewal, and working with First Nations, but we have seen time and time again over the past decade that you have lost your way on the Ring of Fire.

Will the minister admit this is a \$60-billion cut to the economy of this province and to northerners?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** This is a project of great economic development opportunity. The member is right: It's \$60 billion. Materials are in the ground, and we're looking forward to the opportunity to develop them.

When one speaks about the regional framework agreement, which we signed with the Matawa First Nations, one thing was very clear from the beginning—Premier Wynne made it clear, we made it clear: In order for this project to move forward, we need to get it right. That's why that regional framework agreement is so vital and why we're continuing to carry on those discussions—discussions related to regional infrastructure support, discussions related to resource revenue sharing. Those are vital.

The work that we're doing with industry—I mean, here we are on a day we're having Meet the Miners in town, because we're talking about the great opportunities we're seeing in the mining sector. Certainly the Ring of Fire is a particularly exciting opportunity, but one we absolutely need to get right. That's our commitment. That's what we're going to do. We'd sure love to have your support in that regard.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** The Ring of Fire is turning into the ring of smoke because of seven years of inaction by this Liberal government. It's disappointing that there has been such little advancement on something so incredibly important—the economic development and economic growth of this province.

Former Premier Dalton McGuinty once heralded this project as “the most promising mining opportunity” the country has seen in a century. Yet to date, it seems we are nowhere near realizing a \$60-billion investment in our province.

Does the minister understand that the most expensive spending scandal in Ontario today is not eHealth; it is not Ornge; it isn't even the gas plants? It's the mismanagement of the \$60-billion Ring of Fire project. Does he understand that?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** This is a project that's moving forward in a very significant way. We've got a de-

velopment corporation we put in place, a development corporation that, again, is tasked to bring together all the partners to make the infrastructure decisions that are so vital. This is an economic development opportunity in a part of the province that's never seen development before, a very remote part of the province. We need to get it right.

We got the development corporation up in place. We're working very, very closely with the First Nations to make sure that, indeed, they see benefits and value from that project.

May I say once again, Speaker, this is the government that made a \$1-billion commitment to the infrastructure, not matched by anybody, not supported by that party. So while they can stand over there and speak this way, they're not in any way supporting a project that we know will be of tremendous value and benefit to Ontarians for generations to come.

## POWER PLANTS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the government House leader. This week, the President of the Treasury Board will be putting forward a bill for greater transparency and accountability, which your government deemed a priority when it took power earlier this year.

In the spirit of transparency, will the government House leader support tomorrow's opposition motion calling for the last two witnesses, Laura Miller and Peter Faist, to appear before the justice committee before report writing begins?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member opposite for the question.

Speaker, as you are aware, on June 12 our party, our government, received a very strong mandate from the people of Ontario. Part of that mandate was to make sure that we put in place some very key pieces of legislation—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville's timing is not very good, because I just asked for order, and then you talked. So that's one.

Carry on.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, thank you.

Part of our mandate that we received from the people of Ontario is to make sure that we put into place—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew, come to order.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:**—some very important pieces of legislation that died on the order paper, things like reducing auto insurance, making sure that we index minimum wage to cost of living and, of course, ensuring that we've got both public sector and MPP transparency. All those bills are going to the House, and we're looking forward to their speedy passage.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?



**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's unfortunate, that response, given the fact that today the Premier was heralded in the *Toronto Star* for saying she and Tory "share a talent for grown-up conduct that transcends partisan rivalries." The problem is, just four short months ago your government said, "Your government knows that trust is hard-earned, but easily lost."

Whatever capital the government earned on election day will be lost if two key witnesses do not appear before the justice committee. If the government prevents Laura Miller and Peter Faist from appearing before the justice committee, it would be fair comment to say their commitment to transparency is weak and their break from the McGuinty era is just a show.

I ask again: Will the government House leader do the honourable thing and allow the committee to complete its work by bringing in Laura Miller and Peter Faist?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I think, in this House, I have spoken on a regular basis about the need for the justice committee to complete its work. We have spoken about the fact that we want the justice committee to resume its work so that they can provide guidance to the government when it comes to issues around the siting of large energy infrastructure and the kind of things they've been looking for.

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Speaker, that is why we have initiated that process, and we urge the opposition parties to work in a constructive way so that the committee can finish its work. One of the clear messages that we received from Ontarians is that they do not want any more grandstanding and political stalling in this Legislature. They want all members to work together, and what we're seeing right now in the committee is the opposition party yet again grandstanding and stalling the work of the committee.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Whether it's the lost opportunity at the Ring of Fire or preventing the justice committee from completing its work with the last two witnesses, it is clear that you are breaching Ontarians' trust. It's so disappointing that it's happening so near the beginning of your mandate.

The throne speech said, and I quote to you, "And to ensure that its decisions are always made responsibly, openly and in the best interests of Ontarians, your government will take steps to allow the justice committee to write its report." Without listening to the last two key witnesses, that report will be incomplete.

In the past four months, your government has touted openness and responsibility. What's changed?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I thank the member opposite for making my point by quoting the speech from the throne. It says exactly that we want the justice committee to resume its work so it can start writing the report. What's happening right now is that the opposition is doing the polar opposite. They say one thing but they do the other when it is in the committee, which is that they're stalling a very simple, procedural motion that will

allow the justice committee to resume its work when it comes to the matter that it was looking at, in terms of the gas plants, before the election was called. By not letting that procedural motion go through, they're actually undermining their own efforts to make sure that the justice committee can get its work done and Ontarians can get answers when it comes to recommendations that the committee could make, by the work they've done for the last two and half years listening to about 90 witnesses.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Acting Premier.

Yesterday, New Democrats asked three very simple questions about why the Liberals are choosing to open new HST tax loopholes at the same time as they say the cupboard is bare, that they have to sell off parts of our hydro system. We got a lot of bluster; we didn't get an answer. That's becoming the norm in this place.

Does this Liberal government think it is progressive to create new tax loopholes for the wealthiest corporations in the province of Ontario at the same time as moving ahead with Harris-style privatization of our utilities?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Before I answer that question, yesterday I joined with the rest of this House in congratulating people right across Ontario—over 2,800 council members and 700 trustees were elected. Thousands more put their name forward. I know I speak on behalf of the Premier in saying that we're going to work closely with those elected officials. I congratulate the voters as well for participating and making history yesterday.

In regard to the question, I think the question started off by talking about tax loopholes. What she makes reference to is a restricted tax input credit, which is not a tax loophole. In fact, the only loophole is in her reasoning and her logic. We are continuing to do what's necessary to make us competitive and dynamic, and we're going to continue to do so by providing one of the most historic value-added tax systems that makes our businesses competitive, grows our economy and employs people. That is how we move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Perhaps the problem is that the minister doesn't actually understand what a loophole is. Let's look at the Liberal plan. They say that they need money to invest in transit, even though they have created another loophole in their own Trillium Trust and haven't dedicated a nickel thus far to transit.

The Liberals' plan is to privatize local hydro utilities. It does help energy speculators, but means that people are on the hook for paying private power profits on top of skyrocketing hydro bills. At the same time, the Liberals are creating brand new HST loopholes. It puts even more into the pockets of the wealthiest corporations but leaves the rest of us falling behind. Can the Acting Premier explain why the so-called progressive plan is squarely focused on helping Bay Street and not the people of this province?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, it's all about investing in our future: \$29 billion is dedicated to transit over the next 10 years—the members opposite voted against that; it's also another \$100 billion more in infrastructure spending over the next 10 years—they voted against that as well.

The Trillium Trust was established in the fall economic statement of 2013 to enable us to dedicate those funds that would come from any assets or any other issues that were sold, that would be a parked in that fund—dedicated to transit. That is what's been put forward.

When we talk about loopholes and tax credits, the very nature of their question suggests that we shouldn't be competitive, and we must. There are things with regard to the CRA and the federal government that prohibit some of what she is asking us to do.

What we will do is provide for revenue integrity and continue to invest the money—taxpayers' money—into our infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Perhaps the problem is that the finance minister doesn't understand what "dedicated" means, because he certainly avoided the entire premise of that.

Instead of closing HST loopholes that would put money in the Treasury Board every year starting in 2015—you need money for transit, close the loopholes—why do the Liberals think it makes more sense to privatize hydro for some short-term cash when they could start by closing planned HST loopholes and create long-term stability for this province?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** There are no tax loopholes. In fact, what we are doing is finding greater integrity by looking—and we made it very clear in the budget—at finding ways to review our tax credits, review our grants, which she makes reference to as an HST component of a restricted tax input, which is not a loophole.

What she doesn't also recognize—and I fear that the third party doesn't recognize—is the importance of investing in public transit. They didn't do that; they don't see that as being a priority. We know it is. We'll continue to invest. We've dedicated the funding; that is clear. It's been in the budget, and we'll move forward for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

## GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Again, my question is to the Acting Premier. I tried this question yesterday and I didn't get an answer. The government directly employs 3,600 qualified IT professionals. Over the last five years, the portion of the government's IT budget being outsourced to the private sector has increased by 63%. Why is the government expanding its use of private IT firms when a 2012 consultant's report, commissioned by the Ministry of Government Services, found that several IT services cost two to three times more when provided by the private sector?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** As I responded to you yesterday, IT consultants do help the government to provide the services and programs Ontarians need in a cost-effective, efficient and convenient way. We're living in the Internet age, and Ontarians expect their government to be accessible digitally.

We have a strong record of reducing the use of consultants across the government. As we said yesterday, we need IT consultants when the capacity of our expertise does not exist within the Ontario public service. We turn to IT consultants when we need to gain external advice and specialized expertise.

They feel they have all the answers within. We recognize that we need to partner with the private sector in order to achieve what's best.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** What the minister doesn't understand is that IT outsourcing costs more, not less. During the 2013-14 fiscal year alone, the government spent \$703 million on private sector IT services. This includes hiring 1,479 fee-for-service consultants at a total cost of \$131 million. Many of these private IT contractors perform the same tasks as the IT staff currently employed directly by the government, except they cost two to three times more.

Significantly reducing private outsourcing of IT could save this government \$200 million. It's almost like you are wilfully wasting money. When will this government reverse its policy of outsourcing IT and admit that it is a wasteful and expensive approach that results in hundreds of millions of wasted dollars every single year?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** When the need is short term and non-recurring, like the one-time projects to get new programs up and running for cyber security upgrades, we have used IT consultants.

Since 2003, a total of 1,519 consultant positions government-wide have been approved for conversion to OPS staff positions, resulting in ongoing savings of approximately \$60 million a year, and of those converted positions, 1,335 were IT consultants.

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We recently received approval to convert an additional 90 IT consulting positions to full-time equivalents. This will result in a further \$3.6 million in annual savings at maturity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** When you follow the money, you follow the real priorities of the government. When we follow the money, we see that you are dedicated to private IT over the OPS. No doubt about it.

Not only does outsourcing IT services end up costing more, but the government staff get poorer IT service. For example, government IT staff who used to upgrade hundreds of servers that power government computers are now required to provide upgrading instructions to the hourly private contractors instead of doing it themselves. Government service upgrades are now delayed because private contractors don't work on the weekends or even-



ings. So you have hundreds of millions of dollars being wasted, reduced IT support for government services and, ultimately, lower-quality services for the people of this province.

Will this government admit that outsourcing IT has been a huge mistake and change course now?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We need to make upgrades. They're automatic, and they require some support from the IT sector, and so be it. But we're managing our use of consultants through a three-pronged approach: (1) by transferring work to government staff, which is the normal course, (2) by creating a central pool of government IT staff to work on government-wide projects, and (3) by centralizing the acquisition of IT consultant services. The central mobile pool of IT staff introduced in 2009 now saves the government \$10 million per year. So follow the money.

### CASINO THOUSAND ISLANDS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Good morning. My question is to the Acting Premier. In yesterday's municipal election referendum, the people of Kingston gave a very clear message to your government. Almost 70% of them said no to a casino. So on behalf of the residents of Kingston and also those in my riding—in Gananoque, Leeds and the Thousand Islands, who are willing casino hosts—we want to know one thing. They want to hear you say that the government's plans to relocate the Thousand Islands casino to Kingston is off the table. Is it?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I too want to congratulate Bryan Paterson and David Ryan on their successful election last night.

We've always maintained that municipalities need to make their own decisions about whether they support establishing a gaming site. I've been consistent throughout. Municipalities and their leaders have an important role in gauging their residents' views on gaming sites in their communities, and the government will not impose the location of a gaming site on a municipality. We will respect Kingston's desire not to do so.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No. Supplementary.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** You're waiting for it, right? Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

I know that the people I represent in Leeds, the Thousand Islands and Gananoque are very interested in working with the government on not just keeping the site in the Thousand Islands but also expanding on it. So I appreciate the answer.

Now I'd like to know—because I know that my local councils that were elected last night want to hear this: What are the next steps in expanding the casino and creating more jobs in Leeds–Grenville?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The next step is to continue investing for our future—not cutting and certainly not getting rid of 100,000 people's jobs. We'll continue to do what's necessary there.

Pickering has voted that they wish to proceed with establishing a gaming site. We look forward to continuing to work with the municipality of Pickering and the OLG to move forward with the next steps. OLG provides over \$2 billion a year in revenue. That goes directly towards supporting schools, hospitals and the services Ontarians rely upon in Kingston and elsewhere. We'll continue to be committed to modernizing gaming in Ontario in a socially responsible manner—only in those municipalities that have decided to approve one.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. A few weeks ago, we learned that Enbridge failed to install shut-off valves at 95% of the major water crossings along the route of its Line 9 pipeline. These were a condition of project approval. Now Enbridge says that it doesn't need to install these valves. This is the same company that allowed one million gallons of tar sands oil to spill into the Kalamazoo River.

Ever since the federal government gutted environmental protection two years ago, we've seen a culture of impunity grow within Canada's oil and gas sector. Will the provincial government fill this vacuum and conduct a full environmental assessment of the Line 9 project?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I will certainly be happy to meet with the member opposite, to fully hear your concerns on this. This is an issue that has been of great concern to the government of Ontario. The minister who has been dealing with this matter has been the Minister of Energy, my colleague, and he has spoken in the House before about our concerns about the management of this.

The Ministry of the Environment, Mr. Speaker, recognizes that we are moving more chemicals and more fuels. We do that either by marine or by truck or by rail. Pipeline has been one of the safest ways in which we have been moving important fuel and important chemicals that we need to sustain our economy.

We just had a spill outside of Sault Ste. Marie because a rail car went off the rail and dumped a lot of diesel. We have to make sure that we have a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Well, Speaker, I would have appreciated a “yes,” but I'll go to my supplementary.

Enbridge has also refused to be bound by the proposed pipeline provisions of the new Lake Ontario source water plans because the ministry has not yet made them mandatory. So not only has Enbridge thumbed its nose at federal regulators, it's also trying to dodge provincial environmental protection.

Will the provincial government regulate pipelines under the Clean Water Act and make sure that Enbridge

upholds the letter and the spirit of the proposed new Lake Ontario source water protection plan?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** On the issue of source water, which is my responsibility, of the 19 plans, I think 11 of them are approved. This is a process based on local knowledge through our source water protection act, which means that, for the first time in Ontario's history, we protect source water, which also covers things like highways, rail lines and pipelines. We do local risks assessment to make sure that we have the protections in place. By the end of next year, we will have all of those source water protection plans approved, giving Ontarians the highest level of protection for source water from this and other matters.

This government has a very proud record on environmental protection. It has raised the standard. I want to thank the member from St. Catharines, who really did most of the work that I'm standing here offering up some credit for.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario has placed a strong priority on the phasing out and elimination of coal-fired electricity generation. This was discussed very positively and very frequently during the elections by the constituents of Kingston and the Islands. In fact, it will come as no surprise to the members that we are the first jurisdiction in North America to eliminate coal as a source of electricity production.

You have previously informed the House that replacing coal-fired generation with clean, affordable and reliable generation has saved the province approximately \$4.4 billion in avoided health and environmental costs. The people of Ontario are certainly grateful for the results of our government's initiative in fighting climate change and reducing pollution—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock, please. Your time is up. However, I'm looking at two people whose seats are empty where they normally sit, and they're talking too much.

Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, the question has to do with to what extent Ontario is partnering with other provinces moving forward. I thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for the question. Ontario has been actively participating in the Council of the Federation's initiative to develop a Canadian Energy Strategy, or CES. Ontario supports the development of a CES that is reflective of the priorities of all jurisdictions and addresses common energy challenges.

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All provinces and territories are now participating in the development of a national strategy. It was established to address issues of energy demand, diversity of supply, access to new markets, and climate change. Ontario is focused on ensuring that the CES addresses improved ac-

cess to affordable, clean, renewable and reliable supplies of energy for all Canadians, including those living in aboriginal and remote communities. A national energy strategy has been long overdue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I'm grateful to hear of this inter-governmental collaboration and co-operation on the Canadian energy strategy. I know that everyone in this House knows and appreciates the importance of working with all levels of governments and jurisdictions.

The constituents of Kingston and the Islands will be pleased to hear of the CES and how it not only will work to strengthen the economy and create jobs, but will address climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. I'm certain that Ontario's collaboration with all provinces and territories regarding our energy resources, conservation and emerging technologies will lead to improved, clean access to reliable and affordable energy.

Could the minister please elaborate as to how the Canadian Energy Strategy will work to strengthen our economy and how it will foster increased collaboration?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The Canadian Energy Strategy will express a renewed vision that describes the kind of energy future that all Canadians aspire to achieve and will promote the export of energy, expertise and innovation. All provinces and territories will work together in order to grow the economy, protect the environment, mitigate climate change, create new opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all Canadians.

The CES will foster the development of pan-Canadian, regional and bilateral agreements on energy development, transmission and transportation.

We will continue to work with our provincial partners on this initiative and we look forward to the revised submission of a Canadian energy strategy at the 2015 Council of the Federation. We're proud that Premier Wynne is showing leadership nationally on this issue.

### CANCER SCREENING

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, the new PSA testing guidelines from the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care have everybody talking. Specifically, Prostate Cancer Canada is reminding us that when performed appropriately, the benefits of PSA screening far outweigh the negatives, noting that metastatic prostate cancer cases would double and related deaths would increase up to 20% without the screening.

Minister, Prostate Cancer Canada is advocating smart screening to avert the concerns highlighted by the task force and lead to more effective testing, tracking, and, if needed, treatment.

Eight out of 10 provinces pay for this important cancer-detection tool. Ontario is, in fact, one of only two that force men to pay out of their own pocket.

Minister, why do men in Ontario not have equal access to a cancer test that could potentially save their lives?



**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the question. It's because we follow good scientific evidence, plain and simple. In fact, the national recommendations that just came out yesterday speak precisely to that.

It's not simply about the ability of the test at times to detect cancer; it's also looking at the risk of morbidity and mortality for what are known as false positives, where the test proves to be positive, but prostate-specific antigen is something which is naturally occurring in the body, and if you have what's known as a false positive, where the test is positive and in fact you don't have cancer, that could lead you down a pathway where you get unnecessary, even harmful and sometimes fatal, surgery.

What's important here is to make sure that solid national recommendations that we're following here in Ontario are based on scientific evidence and that we follow the guidance of the experts who are brought together specifically for this purpose.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, men across Ontario are asking why they're left to foot the bill for a test that could save their lives. They recall—I recall former Premier McGuinty, on local radio, saying it would be covered, and while I've warned them about the Liberal government's track record on keeping promises, they're still waiting.

Bottom line, Minister: New guidelines do nothing to change the fact that PSA testing is still an important early detection tool, and Ontario men want the choice before examining options such as further observation or treatment.

Minister, will you keep a Liberal promise to fund PSA testing for men here in Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I think I should be very clear that we do offer PSA testing for men in this province who have symptoms that may be due to prostate cancer. We also offer it free through OHIP, as I just mentioned, for individuals who require it for monitoring, so if perhaps they have had prostate cancer and are being treated for it. What the member opposite is trying to do is to move against the scientific evidence and do routine screening of men who have absolutely no symptoms of prostate cancer.

As a physician, I understand where we need to provide this test: a PSA test for monitoring individuals who have or have had prostate cancer, or those who present symptoms that could be consistent. We offer that test; we offer it free of charge. The test is available for those individuals who choose to pay for it if they are entirely asymptomatic from any symptoms that are consistent with prostate cancer. I would hope the member opposite would agree with that policy.

#### FIRST RESPONDERS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. I think all members of this House would agree that the events of the past week in Ottawa have demonstrated, once again, the enormously important role that

police and other first responders play in protecting our safety and our security.

In the opinion of New Democrats, there would be no better way for this House to show its gratitude and respect for those first responders than to pass my Bill 2, on post-traumatic stress disorder and the WSIB. If passed, the presumptive legislation would mean that it would be presumed that front-line responders suffering from PTSD acquired the illness on the job and therefore are eligible for WSIB benefits.

Will this government commit to passing presumptive legislation with regard to PTSD now so that our first responders get the help they need immediately?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Let me thank the member for the courtesy she has extended by asking this question. I think it's a question that's of interest to all members of this House. I think we all agree that we owe to our first responders our best efforts when it comes to putting the best legislation in place to deal with the emerging issue of post-traumatic stress disorder, and mental health in general, in the workplace.

What we've done in the past 24 months is, we've had a round table at the Ministry of Labour. We brought all the first responders together—people from policing, fire-fighting, emergency medical services, transit services, and health care services, including nurses. They've given us their best advice as to how to deal with PTSD. I agree that dealing with the WSIB component of that is a major part of that, and I commit to working with you to make sure we implement the best possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Back to the minister: He heard from all of those first responders that their major demand is exactly this presumptive legislation, so I'm going to ask again on their behalf. Our first responders need presumptive legislation passed now—not more round tables, not just a conference in 2015.

I ask again: Will the government commit today to passing presumptive legislation with regard to PTSD for first responders?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, again, to the member from Parkdale–High Park for her supplementary. What I will commit to is to investigate every possible way of addressing this. There are other jurisdictions in Canada, for example, that have a different way of dealing with this. Alberta, for example, I think has made some changes as late as 2012 in the way that we deal with it. We're taking a very, very serious look at what you've proposed in Bill 2.

Let me tell you what we are doing. We've committed about \$4.5 million to the OPP to deal with mental health issues. The Office of the Fire Marshal is now providing PTSD training to all its fire investigators. The Ontario Fire College is also implementing a mental health awareness course.

**1120**

Speaker, I think we all have a role to play in this. I commit to the member, I commit to this House, that

we're going to do the best possible for the people who protect us.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and wellness.

Minister, we are all aware that the population of our seniors is growing very rapidly. One of our government's top priorities is ensuring that our seniors are living healthier, safer and more secure lives. However, in light of yesterday's fire and evacuation at Fairview Lodge in Whitby, we know about the need for long-term-care homes to meet the highest safety standards, including the mandatory sprinkler systems.

I know that we have committed in our budget to helping operators accelerate their redevelopment. I'd like to know from the minister what she is doing to follow up on this very important commitment.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Thanks to the member from Kitchener Centre for this very important and timely question.

I'd like to begin by saying that our thoughts are with the families and all 192 residents of Fairview Lodge. I'd also like to begin by thanking the staff and first responders, who worked so hard and so swiftly to ensure the safety of all 192 residents in yesterday's fire at Fairview Lodge.

We were relieved to learn that all residents had been evacuated without injury, and the ministry is working closely with the LHIN and the CCAC to ensure residents remain safe and cared for.

Ontario was the first province to make sprinklers mandatory in existing licensed long-term-care homes. Now we have committed to redeveloping older homes to ensure they meet modern standards of safety and comfort. That is why this morning, I was at the fall symposium of the OLTCA, the Ontario Long Term Care Association, to talk about our plan for redevelopment, which I'll address in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm very pleased to hear that the minister is moving forward with this very important budget commitment.

I know that this government has already had lots of good news to report on long-term-care homes, like increasing funding by 86% since 2003, like funding over 8,000 new full-time front-line workers, and we've opened more than 10,000 new long-term-care beds.

But this commitment to push ahead with the redevelopment of 30,000 beds over 10 years is very ambitious. What is the minister doing to make sure that this very aggressive redevelopment stays on track?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Thanks again to the member for that supplementary. I'd like to begin by saying that this morning, I was at the Ontario Long Term Care Association's fall symposium, where we officially announced that we will be moving forward with redevelopment of 30,000 beds in 300 homes.

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to visit a number of long-term-care facilities, because I believe direct engagement is a great approach to transforming the sector. This is what underlies our approach to redevelopment.

We are bringing forward these changes after consultation with key stakeholders in the sector. We listened, and now we are ready to take the next step to ensure successful redevelopment. For example, we will be increasing the construction funding subsidy by up to \$4.73 per resident per day. We have also extended the maximum LTC home licence from 25 years to 30 years.

I look forward to a very successful redevelopment.

### PAN AM GAMES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. When it comes to the Pan/Parapan Am Games, your government has said the games are expected to attract more than 250,000 tourists. But a recent report released by the Greater Toronto Hotel Association says that they only expect that 10% of attendees will require hotel accommodation.

Minister, can you explain the large discrepancy between your numbers and the industry's projections?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

There's something incredible taking place in this province, and there's a spirit that has captured this province for the Pan Am—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex will come to order.

Please.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** In fact, yesterday, I had the opportunity to visit the University of Toronto. They have a new stadium, the Goldring stadium, that will host basketball and volleyball during the Pan Am Games for—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Is anybody staying there?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** It will host volleyball and basketball during the games as a test venue.

In fact, two thirds of that money was raised by the local community and the Goldring family. Our government put in one third of that money. It's an incredible testament to what is happening in this province.

We're going to have 250,000 people from across the Americas and across this country visit Ontario next year. And in fact—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Very well done. I appreciate that.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Minister, I mean, really, put the pom poms away. It shows that a significant component of all attendees will be local or regional. This means that the people in Ontario will not only be stuck with the bill for the games themselves, but it will not be the international tourism draw that you are selling it as.

Minister, we are now less than a year away from the games. They're supposed to be a way to showcase On-



tario to an international audience. The games will create only a 0.7% impact for the hotel industry. How are we going to showcase Ontario when nobody wants to come?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** You know, it's interesting. On this side of the House and right across this province, people are standing behind the Pan Am Games and the Parapan Am Games. It's that party opposite that constantly continues to put down our athletes. In fact, the critic on the opposite side said that these were second-tier games and that no one should be cheering for these games.

We are going to cheer for our athletes. We're going to cheer for Ontario. We're going to cheer for Canadians. We believe that the 7,000 athletes that will be here, the 23,000 volunteers, the 15 new builds and 10 new facilities are a testament to the investment we've made on this side of the House. Ontario believes in what we're doing and they stand behind what these games represent.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. People in my riding are worried that 75 non-profit, long-term-care beds at the Niagara Health System will be sold off to a private operator looking to turn a profit. The Liberals have a record of privatizing health services every time they get a chance. But in Welland, we believe that quality health care for our seniors should come before profits.

I wrote the minister three weeks ago, asking for a guarantee that these non-profit beds would not be sold off to the highest corporate bidder, but I've heard nothing but silence from this minister. So I'm asking again: Will the minister commit today to stop the sale of Welland's long-term-care beds to a for-profit operator?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** To the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Associate Minister?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** I thank the member opposite for the question. I want to assure her that we're committed to making Ontario the best place for seniors to age. That includes ensuring that our long-term-care facilities are the best facilities.

I also want to reassure the member opposite that, indeed, the not-for-profit sector plays a very important role when it comes to running long-term-care homes. They bring a particular lens that is very, very valuable. I can assure her that working with the non-profit sector in the long-term-care sector continues to be a priority.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** This Liberal government has actually been working with the Niagara Health System in secret to sell off these beds. Offers from well-respected

non-profit operators in my municipality have been made and rejected.

The people of Welland do not want to lose our 75 long-term-care beds at our local hospital for a private, for-profit scheme cooked up in the backrooms of the ministry. This is not open and transparent. We don't want Welland to be another failed experiment in privatization that reduces quality of care to our seniors.

Will the minister make it crystal clear today that he will use his authority under the Long-Term Care Homes Act to step in and reject any proposed sale of Welland's non-profit long-term-care beds to the for-profit sector?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** I don't know why the member can't take yes for an answer. I said we are committed to ensuring that we have a robust not-for-profit long-term-care sector in the province.

**1130**

I also want to talk about a very important announcement that we made today that speaks to the importance that we place on the long-term-care sector, and that is the redevelopment of 30,000 beds and 300 homes here in Ontario. This is going to be one of the largest redevelopment projects for the long-term-care sector, including the not-for-profit sector. I look forward to working with you to make sure that we have a robust for-profit and a robust not-for-profit long-term-care sector.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. When I was speaking with members from the Orléans Chamber of Commerce and local representatives from CFIB, they expressed concerns about the impact of our Ontario Retirement Pension Plan on small business.

Many businesses I have spoken with do acknowledge that we have an under-saving problem. They know that Ontarians are not saving enough for retirement. In the long run, we know that this will be bad for Ontarians and bad for business. I also understand that our government has been working with businesses and taking several steps to ensure that we support small businesses as we move forward with the implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Could the minister please inform the House what specific steps our government has taken to ensure that small and medium-sized businesses are able to plan and adapt as we move forward?

**Hon. Mitzi Hunter:** I want to thank the honourable member from Ottawa-Orléans for her question.

The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is an investment in a secure retirement future for all Ontarians. That's not just individuals but businesses as well. Without action today on retirement security, this has the potential to stagnate growth and create economic uncertainty.

The cost of inaction is far too high. We need to take leadership now. That's why we're taking steps to help businesses plan, including: introduction in 2017 to coincide with reductions in EI premiums; employers will

be enrolled in stages, starting with the largest employers; and contributions will be phased in over two years.

I've also been working with and listening to businesses, including several meetings with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and local chambers and other business groups. I look forward to continuing to work with business to minimize the short-term impact and help them plan for the implementation of the ORPP.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Thank you to the minister for that response. My constituents in Ottawa–Orléans will be pleased to learn what our government is doing to help businesses across the province plan for the introduction of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Again to the Associate Minister of Finance: We know that the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is an enhancement to our economy in the long run. The ORPP, however, is not being introduced in isolation. This is just one of the ways in which our government is helping to grow our economy and create a competitive business climate.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could you please inform the House what else our government is doing to promote our province's continued economic competitiveness?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** Thank you again to the honourable member from Ottawa–Orléans for the question.

Our government is continuing to work to strengthen our economy today while making the necessary decisions to ward off problems we see on the horizon. Since the recession, our government has created over half a million net new jobs. In September alone we saw an increase of 24,700 jobs across the province. The Premier and all my colleagues are working very hard to foster a competitive business climate and promote Ontario's continued economic growth. We've introduced several business tax reforms that will deliver over \$9 billion in tax cuts annually to business and enhance Ontario's competitiveness, such as the HST, eliminating capital tax and cutting corporate income tax rates for small and large businesses. We've also eased the regulatory burden on businesses by removing 80,000 regulatory requirements.

These reforms are positioning Ontario as one of the most attractive business locations in the industrialized world for new business investment.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, by now you know from both the general public and the Ombudsman that your ministry has done a terrible job in the oversight of the Ontario daycare system. Even Bill 10 is seriously flawed, with many loopholes, because you tried to get it out in front of the Ombudsman's report.

Tens of thousands of private daycare spaces will be eliminated without any consultation whatsoever with the private daycare operators. Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point clear that the private daycare operators have no problem with licensing, oversight or a registry.

Minister, will you stand in the House today and agree that you will allow province-wide committee hearings after second reading debate?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** We keep hearing these references to the damage that Bill 10 is going to do and what our transformation is going to do, but I would point out that the Ombudsman in his report, in fact, congratulated our ministry for working with his staff. He said, "Here are 113 recommendations," and of his 113 recommendations, Bill 10 actually is the response to 35 of them. The changes that we've made to our enforcement protocols address another 60.

So in fact, 95 of the recommendations, by the Ombudsman's own accounting, have already been addressed by my ministry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, private daycare operators are being treated like criminals by you and your ministry. Rallies protesting your flawed bill are taking place, and more will be organized. We'll be in many of your ridings with the rallies, okay? Over 1,500 people signed an online petition protesting your bill in just over three hours on Sunday.

Bill 10 is a disaster and must be amended. For the sake of fairness and transparency, this bill must be properly travelled and consulted. For the sake of small operators, their families and the economy of Ontario, plus the tens of thousands of children, will you please agree to province-wide hearings? All your hearings can be completed by Family Day in mid-February. After a decade of lack of oversight, surely we can delay Bill 10 seven weeks and get the bloody thing right.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Speaker, I make absolutely no apology for following the Ombudsman's recommendation and actually creating a dedicated enforcement team that, for the first time in the history of Ontario, will actually have the power to do something when they find somebody who's violating the rules.

For the first time in the history of Ontario, our inspectors will have the authority to impose a fine if somebody breaks the law. They won't actually have to go to court now to shut down a child care where there's a threat to children's health and safety. They'll be able to close it down without actually going to court to get an injunction.

I make no apology for putting those rules in place, and the Ombudsman agrees with all those actions we have taken.

## NURSE PRACTITIONERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Yesterday, the minister was proud to mention that Ontario has 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics, but he didn't mention



that his Liberal government limits the capacity of these clinics, resulting in wait-lists and delays for patients.

He didn't mention that the Liberals discourage specialists from accepting patients referred by nurse practitioners, and he refused to mention that huge barriers prevent nurse practitioners from working to their full scope, such as ordering X-rays, performing tests as simple as urinalysis, or prescribing controlled substances.

I'm really delighted that so many nurse practitioners joined us today at Queen's Park. But it's also important to deliver a reality check. You see, Speaker, those measures won't cost the government anything. They are 100% within the minister's power, and they will save our system money. My question is simple: What is he waiting for?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me the opportunity as well to welcome our nurse practitioners here today. They contribute, as we know—well, let me put it this way: We're so proud that—in fact, it was in Sudbury, as the member opposite knows, I think, in 2007 that the first of 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics in this province opened. I think that in that first year, 2,000 patients were registered at that one clinic alone. What we've seen since that time is what I would call a dramatic expansion and an appropriate use of our health resources to ensure that our nurse practitioners, as we should for nurses across this province, are able to work to their full scope of practice.

There are particular areas of the province where the provision of the services that they provide is even more vital because of the challenges that are faced by local communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The minister continued to speak glowingly about nurse-practitioner-led clinics, and we all agree. They expand access to primary care for Ontarians. But that can't happen without a recruitment strategy to fix the damage caused by some of this government's policies.

Yes, this government froze the pay of nurse practitioners who work in primary care, who work in those nurse-practitioner-led clinics. They have stood by our nurse practitioners while they received some of the lowest pay throughout our country and they have watched 20% of the positions in primary care go unfilled because of opportunities that can be found elsewhere. That's no way to expand public access to high-quality primary care.

Will the minister commit to a real recruitment and retention strategy to attract and keep primary care nurse practitioners in Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I had the opportunity just about a week ago to address about 900 staff who work in our family health teams across the province. I specifically spoke to this challenge that they are facing—and it's not specific to our family health teams, but the recruitment and retention of vital health personnel. We are working diligently on this specific issue.

We're also working on the scope of practice for our nurses, including our nurse-practitioner-led clinics and our nurse practitioners.

I believe strongly that we should work with our health care specialists, including our nurse practitioners, to allow them to work to the full abilities that they were trained for. I think we should aim for nothing less; it makes for a stronger, better health care system. We are working with our nurses, including nurse practitioners, to expand their scope of practice and their ability, for example, to prescribe medications and order more tests.

## SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M. John Fraser:** Ma question est pour la procureure générale. Je sais que dans notre province, notre système de justice a deux langues officielles : le français et l'anglais. Dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa-Sud, je reçois quelquefois des commettants qui partagent certaines inquiétudes face aux défis auxquels ils font face dans le système judiciaire en Ontario.

Est-ce que la procureure générale peut nous mettre à jour sur les activités de son ministère en ce qui a trait à l'accès à la justice pour les francophones de l'Ontario?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Je veux remercier le membre d'Ottawa-Sud pour son excellent français et son appui pour la francophonie.

Alors, l'excellent rapport sur l'accès à la justice en français du Comité consultatif de la magistrature et du barreau, mené par le juge Paul Rouleau et M<sup>e</sup> LeVay, nous a permis de cerner les lacunes qui demeurent et d'établir une stratégie pour aller de l'avant en Ontario français.

Je suis très heureuse de pouvoir confirmer à l'Assemblée aujourd'hui que le ministère va en effet lancer un projet pilote d'un an qui vise à relever les défis des justiciables, des avocats et d'autres utilisateurs francophones du service judiciaire. Ce projet pilote prendra place à Ottawa.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 18. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All members take their seats, please. Members: very healthy discussions going on.

On October 27, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 5.

All those in favour, rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk, please.

**Ayes**

Albanese, Laura  
Anderson, Granville  
Baker, Yvan  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Ballard, Chris  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Del Duca, Steven  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Dong, Han

Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fraser, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoggarth, Ann  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hunter, Mitzie  
Jaczek, Helena  
Kiwala, Sophie  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Marie-France  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
Malhi, Harinder  
Mangat, Amrit  
Martins, Cristina  
Mauro, Bill  
McGarry, Kathryn

McMahon, Eleanor  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milczyn, Peter Z.  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naidoo-Harris, Indira  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziotti, David  
Potts, Arthur  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Vernile, Daiene  
Wong, Soo  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Armstrong, Teresa J.  
Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Campbell, Sarah  
Cimino, Joe  
Clark, Steve  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Fedeli, Victor  
Fife, Catherine  
Forster, Cindy  
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne  
Gélinas, France  
Gretzky, Lisa  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael  
Hatfield, Percy  
Hudak, Tim  
Jones, Sylvia  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Mantha, Michael  
Martow, Gila  
McDonell, Jim

Munro, Julia  
Natyshak, Taras  
Nicholls, Rick  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Sattler, Peggy  
Scott, Laurie  
Tabuns, Peter  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Vanthof, John  
Walker, Bill  
Yakabuski, John  
Yurek, Jeff

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 51; the nays are 38.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** With no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.*

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Mr. Speaker, it's my absolute pleasure to introduce Mr. Frank Klees, former member from Newmarket–Aurora. Frank, welcome home.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions? Further introductions? I'm sure that there are further introductions.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker. I didn't want to introduce Frank Klees to the Legislature. However, I am sure he's here to collect the Ornge report, waiting for the government to release it today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That will not get you another point of order.

I am going to steal a little time because I want to make sure I get this right. I'm waiting for the actual numbers, so I thank the table for that.

As the Speaker has the tradition of introducing former members and some other people learn how to step on the Speaker's announcements, I'd like to introduce, in the members' gallery, Frank Klees from York–Mackenzie in the 36th, Oak Ridges for the 37th and 38th, and Newmarket–Aurora for the 39th and 40th Parliaments. Mr. Frank Klees.

It is now time for members' statements.

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS****ALICE MUNRO WRITERS AND READERS FESTIVAL**

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Today, it's my pleasure to honour the 2014 Alice Munro Writers and Readers Festival that took place in North Huron. The festival was a huge success, with over 250 guests visiting Huron–Bruce throughout the weekend. The festival encourages fresh budding writers and celebrates storytelling and reading throughout North Huron, the riding and the world.

As I have mentioned in the House before, Alice Munro is from my hometown of Wingham, Ontario, and she also lived in Clinton.

The festival hosted a number of events in different locations throughout the weekend in North Huron, culminating in a gala event at the Royal Canadian Legion branch 180 in Wingham. The gala saw five of the nine finalists read their short story competition entries. The festival had finalists from England, PEI, South Korea, New York and across Ontario.

I would like to specifically congratulate Lizzy McDonald, who is from the town of Goderich, Canada's prettiest little town, for placing third in the youth division.

It is exciting to see the interest and support that this unique festival brings to North Huron. Alice Munro is a true Canadian great. She was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature and was declared a "master of the contemporary short story." Alice Munro is one of only 13 women worldwide to receive this prestigious award. It is a true honour to stand here today to acknowledge her and the festival participants.

I congratulate the local committee for coordinating such a wonderful festival.

**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** On Friday, the people of Windsor and Essex county were disappointed to learn that the much-anticipated investment to build Ford's global engines would be going to Mexico rather than Windsor.

The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure stated that his government will not invest tax dollars in any partnership that doesn't provide a strong return for Ontarians. Yesterday, the Deputy Premier stood before this House and stated that the



government will continue to make investments in the automotive sector, where they make sense.

Ford's multi-billion dollar investment had the potential to create 1,000 new jobs and solidify Ford's long-term presence in Windsor. Hundreds of laid-off Ford employees would be called back to work.

When the government decided that this automotive investment didn't make sense, clearly they didn't consider the potential for spinoff jobs.

Wages in our automotive sector allow employees to start and support families. The Big Three automakers often employ local students as part-time employees, allowing them to significantly reduce their student debt while gaining valuable career experience.

Windsor's workforce is highly skilled and second to none in terms of productivity and safety. That is why companies consider investing in Windsor. We count on government to table competitive packages to secure these investments.

This is not the last time we will compete with other jurisdictions for automotive investment, and we need this government to understand how important it is to capitalize on these opportunities. Hopefully, the next time this government is called to the table they will understand that automotive investment in Windsor not only provides a strong return for Ontarians, it also makes complete sense.

#### CITY OF OTTAWA

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'd like to begin by thanking my colleagues who covered my House duty so I could return to Ottawa early on Wednesday. Last week, we were all shaken by the terrible loss of Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. We were shaken by the attack on our Parliament and the prospect of violence in our peaceful and safe city of Ottawa.

We all learned of the bravery of the Sergeant-at-Arms, the House of Commons guards and many of our first responders. I was most moved by the bravery of a group of people who rushed towards danger to provide care and to comfort Corporal Cirillo. This was truly a selfless act.

Last week I was moved by the outpouring of support at the cenotaph and the long lineups to sign the book of condolences at city hall. In our churches, our mosques, our synagogues and our temples, we all came together to pray for Corporal Cirillo, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and their families, and all those affected by the violence that we witnessed.

In Ottawa we are one, and together we are strong. I have always been proud of the diverse and beautiful, welcoming city that is my home. Last week reminded me that it is Ottawa's people, all of us together, who make it such a wonderful place.

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF CANADA

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'm pleased to rise today in support of the Multiple Sclerosis Society's day at Queen's Park.

Today, volunteers from the MS Society of Canada are at Queen's Park meeting with MPPs from each political party to raise awareness about the needs of people living with multiple sclerosis and to bring us the perspectives and suggestions from people affected by MS: the caregivers, the staff and all the volunteers.

I want to thank all members who are meeting today with MS Society representatives and wearing a carnation in support of their good fight.

One of the things I've always believed about the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is that it is a great organization, and, as a great organization, it attracts great people. This is true of Michael Roche, who is in his 12th year as a volunteer in the Durham region; as well as Ontario and Nunavut division manager of government relations Donna Czukar; board chair Marie Vaillant; GTA regional director Andrea Strath; and every MS advocate present here today.

It's hard to hear that every day nearly three people in Canada learn that they have MS. It's hard to imagine that there are 100,000 Canadians—our friends and neighbours—living with MS and going through their day doing the same things we are, but which we take for granted, while battling at all times this disabling disease. It's hard to imagine that three times as many women are diagnosed with this disease as men.

We're proud of the work our health researchers are leading, continuously seeking to learn more about the disease and to develop new therapies. I have no doubt that one day we will find a cure for MS. That's also why I believe it's so vital for us to be involved and to keep the dialogue going until that day when we end MS.

#### PLENTIFUL HARVEST

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Speaker, as you know, while some of us are doing okay in Ontario and a few are doing really, really well, many of our friends and neighbours are struggling to put food on the table.

I want to tell you about an amazing food rescue program in my riding of Windsor—Tecumseh. It's called Plentiful Harvest and it's operated by the Unemployed Help Centre. Since 2012, this program has built over 50 ongoing relationships with local farmers, greenhouse operators, food distributors and banquet hall managers in Windsor and Essex county.

The program has rescued more than four million pounds of food for the needy. This is fresh, nutritious food, mostly produce like peppers, corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, melons, peaches and apples, but surplus food from restaurants and banquet halls is also collected.

#### 1510

Under the supervision of certified chefs, students who otherwise may have dropped out of school are taught kitchen skills. They prepare the food, create delicious meals and take great pride in doing so. Meals are packed and distributed to those most in need through a network of local food banks and community agencies.

Congratulations to the students, the farmers and the volunteers, and special thanks for the hard work of chef Robert Catherine and manager Mike Turnbull at the Unemployed Help Centre. A salute from all of us here in the Ontario Legislature for a job well done and for setting an example for all of Ontario.

#### RIDING OF OTTAWA-ORLÉANS / CIRCONSCRIPTION D'OTTAWA- ORLÉANS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Let me start by congratulating Ottawa mayor Jim Watson on his re-election, and also my city councillors of Ottawa-Orléans, Stephen Blais, Bob Monette and Tim Tierney, on their re-election. Also, we have a newcomer councillor: Jody Mitic for Innes ward. Mr. Mitic will be replacing long-standing councillor Rainer Bloess, who has decided to retire after 20 years of serving his community.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I dedicated a few hours of my time to help celebrate Orléans at the all-day event Experience Orléans, organized by the Orléans Chamber of Commerce, at the Shenkman centre. The main purpose of that gathering of residents and business people has been to bring awareness of the possibilities Orléans has to offer.

I was also very happy to see Employment Ontario as a sponsor, promoting our government programs with businesses and successfully hosting a job fair. More than 25 employers were on-site, looking to hire people.

This free event, very well attended, gave our community of Ottawa-Orléans the chance to discover the businesses where they live, work and stay.

J'aimerais donc remercier devant cette Chambre l'équipe de la chambre de commerce, dont sa présidente, Jamie Kwong; the chair, Donna Roney; and Jason Bellefleur, who helped with the coordination of volunteers; ainsi que tous les employeurs participants pour leur passion et leur sentiment d'appartenance à la merveilleuse communauté d'Ottawa-Orléans.

#### JACK WILSON

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Last Friday, I had the occasion to attend the annual warden's banquet in Renfrew county. The big event of the evening, however, was something more important: a tribute to Jack Wilson.

Jack Wilson was first elected to the council of the former Pembroke township in 1963. He announced this year that he would not seek re-election as the mayor of Laurentian Valley—over 50 consecutive years in elected office, something that has been accomplished by very few, and something, I dare say, is unlikely to be accomplished in the future.

Jack's 50-plus years were made possible because of who he is, the principles by which he has conducted himself and the way he has treated others. I've had the pleasure and the honour of experiencing that first-hand over the past 11 years. Jack's word is his bond; you can

take it to the bank. If he doesn't agree with you, he'll tell you so, and he'll tell you why. He's a legend in municipal politics, and anyone who has sat alongside him would enthusiastically agree.

Jack would be the first to say that he didn't accomplish this alone; that his 58-year partnership with his good wife, Evelyn, was paramount. The support of Evelyn and their children made all those sacrifices easier to bear.

When Jack does leave public life, I am convinced that his commitment to his community will be as strong as ever. Jack Wilson won't be going away. I'm sure that in the future my path will continue to cross with his. Whenever that does happen, I will be proud to shake his hand and share our thoughts on whatever the story of the day might be.

All the best, my friend. You have served your people well.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I extend my gratitude to the members of this House for their unanimous support of my private member's motion asking for a national inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women.

What happened in this chamber last Thursday is a powerful message. This House's impromptu recognition and celebration of the aboriginal women who came to the Legislature as witnesses to the occasion was also significant. Your actions were emblematic of the real will that exists and continues to grow in this country to right the injustices and the generations of suffering of aboriginal women and girls.

I was, however, disappointed to learn that a member of this House informed my guests in the gallery that the motion was meaningless, a waste of time, and would never result in action. Last Thursday was a bright day amongst many dark ones for these women; it was not the time for such comments. I hope I will never hold such a low opinion of our work in this House.

Like the Premier, I believe the government can be a force for good and we need to continue to work together on this issue. Meegwetch. Merci beaucoup. Thank you.

#### TED REEVE COMMUNITY ARENA

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** On Saturday, October 18, a much-storied shrine located in my riding of Beaches-East York celebrated its 60th anniversary.

The Ted Reeve Community Arena came to be thanks to the initiative of a number of local residents who felt it was time for an indoor arena in East York. The community raised over \$125,000, and, with the city of Toronto matching those funds, Ted Reeve Community Arena was born with the support of Ted Reeve, who was a local Telegram sportswriter and a professional athlete. Ted Reeve won two Grey Cups with the Balmy Beach club and was the project's biggest champion.



Bob Acton, a 50-year veteran of the Ted Reeve Community Arena, dropped the puck for the ceremonial faceoff at what is now also the home for the Malvern Black Knights.

Some of the kids who played there have grown up to be professionals. We have Al Sims, who played for the Kings; Shayne Antoski; John Smrke, who played for the Blues; Nick Beverley, who played for Boston and the LA Kings and also briefly headed up the Toronto Maple Leafs; and also Rich Clune, who now plays for the Nashville Predators.

The Ted Reeve arena is a great example of a community facility that makes Beaches–East York special, and I'm delighted to be able to honour it here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### BIBLE BAPTIST TEMPLE(ST. THOMAS) ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2014

Mr. Yurek moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr5, An Act respecting Bible Baptist Temple (St. Thomas).

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I rise today as we table our government's response to Inclusion and Opportunity, the final report of the Select Committee on Developmental Services, released on July 22 of this year.

I want to begin by recognizing the select committee members on all sides of the House for their hard work. I also want to thank the many people who took the time to appear before the committee and provide written submissions. The select committee process was an important opportunity for people with developmental disabilities, family members, service providers and community partners to have their voices heard directly by their elected representatives.

Meeting the varied needs of people with developmental disabilities is not a simple process. The resources and solutions needed to help these individuals better integrate into our communities are as distinct as the people themselves. The committee's report reinforces the

concerns which our government has also heard, and which we have taken steps on many fronts to address.

Our \$810-million budget investment in developmental services will, over the next three years, address many of the select committee's recommendations. It will provide new direct funding to 21,000 people, addressing the current Special Services at Home and Passport wait-lists. It will help more than 4,200 adults with developmental disabilities find the supports they need to navigate key life changes such as leaving school or finding a job. It will provide residential support for 1,400 people with urgent needs, and it will promote service efficiency and new community living partnerships to make greater inclusion a reality for many more Ontarians.

1520

I am proud to say that thousands of people are already benefiting from our budget investment. We have already approved new direct funding for 6,000 families for Special Services at Home and nearly 1,900 adults under Passport.

We have also approved new residential supports for more than 350 people this year, and people are transitioning to their new homes as we speak. Our housing task force has already started its work to find new and more effective ways of providing residential housing for people with developmental disabilities.

Today, through our newsletter Spotlight, we will be proving our stakeholders with an update on how the budget funding is already starting to improve the sector and to help people with developmental disabilities.

I want to thank our community agencies in the developmental services sector for their partnership in making these budget commitments a reality on the ground.

Our government's full response to the select committee has been tabled with the Clerk, and I would like to take this opportunity to speak to the broader needs of people with developmental disabilities that the select committee looked to.

We share the committee's strong interest in improving employment opportunities. Our budget investment includes a new employment and modernization fund to find ways to make employment in the community the preferred outcome for individuals with developmental disabilities.

My ministry will work with the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure's Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities. This council is working with the employer community to increase the participation of people with disabilities in Ontario's workplaces. As was announced last Friday, the Honourable David. C. Onley will act as a special adviser to Minister Duguid in this regard.

We are also responding to the needs of individuals with a dual diagnosis by working across government to better integrate supports from childhood onward. We are working across government to strengthen primary care for people with developmental disabilities, improve teacher training to support students, and implement inte-

grated transition planning for young people with developmental disabilities who are preparing for adulthood. To support this cross-ministerial work, I have asked my parliamentary assistant, the MPP for Scarborough–Agincourt, who was a member of the select committee, to focus on this task.

We have begun working with Developmental Services Ontario to improve its ability to support individuals and families in accessing the developmental services system and supports in the community in consistent and fair way. For example, through the 2014 budget, the ministry has provided resources for DSOs to hire new assessors to speed up and ensure the consistency of assessments across the province.

This work also includes improving information technology across the developmental services sector to strengthen our ability to plan and manage the entire system.

In the last decade we have worked in partnership with families and community agencies to begin to build a responsive developmental services system. We want people with developmental disabilities to be fully included in the fabric of our communities and be able to live as independently as possible.

I want to thank the select committee again for its work. I look forward to working with our partners as we continue to promote independence, inclusion and choice for people with developmental disabilities.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** It's my pleasure to stand in the House today to welcome the Ontario Mining Association to the annual Meet the Miners Day here at Queen's Park. This is an event that has been held here in one form or another since 1978. Certainly, as Ontario's mines minister, today I welcome the opportunity to bring senior mining industry representatives and government together. It's a really tremendous opportunity for MPPs and our staff to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the vital role that mining surely plays in Ontario's economy.

Consider these two facts: In 2003, exploration expenditures in the province of Ontario were \$219 million; in 2013—despite some very interesting challenges—those expenditures totalled more than \$600 million. As for production, in 2003, the value of Ontario's mineral production was \$5.7 billion—an impressive figure. In 2013, though, that value reached \$9.8 billion.

To bring those figures into perspective, Ontario continues to be the leading province in Canada for mineral exploration and production. The province's 31 operating metal mines provided about 23% of the country's mineral production last year.

Certainly, maintaining our position as a global mining leader requires a strong mining sector supported by competitive regulatory and taxation policies. It's a fact that it takes years for a mine to come into production, and only one in about every 10,000 projects actually develops

into an operating mine, which makes that, let's say, all the more impressive.

Despite, again, many challenges in the sector, right now there are more than 35 mineral projects in advanced development in Ontario. Mine construction is actually under way at, I believe, six of those.

New mine construction includes Goldcorp's Hollinger gold mine in Timmins, the Cochenour gold mine in Red Lake, Rubicon's Phoenix gold mine in the Red Lake area, St Andrew Goldfields' Taylor gold mine in Timmins, New Gold's gold and silver operation in Rainy River, and Glencore's zinc and copper operation in Sudbury. Those six projects alone represent about \$1.8 billion in investment and about 1,600 jobs across northern Ontario.

As well, there are some mine expansion projects, such as the one in my riding of Thunder Bay–Superior North: North American Palladium's Lac des Iles mine just north of the city, a great project with a new mine shaft put in place. Glencore's Fraser Morgan Mine in Sudbury and Goldcorp's Hoyle Pond winze project in Timmins are also under way.

These mine developments and expansions are very key projects that will deliver important, well-paying jobs to the province, certainly very much to the north, and make an extremely significant contribution to Ontario's economy.

For those who want more detailed information about Ontario's mines and the commodities, the mineral and exploration statistics for 2013 have just been released online by our ministry. I invite everybody to go and take a look at them.

I think it's also important, Mr. Speaker, particularly today, to draw to members' attention a new report that has been commissioned by the Ontario Mining Association on the estimated economic impact of a new gold mine in Ontario. During construction, a new open-pit gold mine can be expected to add about \$140 million annually to Ontario's GDP and generate more than 1,500 direct and indirect jobs annually over about a three-year construction period. For each year of operation, a new mine could add about \$246 million to the provincial GDP and increase employment by 1,300—obviously a huge economic impact.

I also want to take this opportunity to commend the Canadian Association of Mining Equipment and Services for Export—or CAMESE, as we know them in the business—for their very recent study that focuses on the province's mining supply and services sector. This is a remarkable part of the story of the economy in the province. It's an economic force, not just in northern Ontario as you certainly would expect, but also in southern Ontario, where a number of mining supply and service companies are located. In 2011, the sector contributed approximately \$6.2 billion to Ontario's GDP, which makes it an incredibly significant economic engine for the province. These are important facts for people to know, particularly for those who recognize that at the same time we're going through some challenging times.



Certainly, while Ontario's international reputation as a destination of choice for mineral development remains very firmly entrenched, the province's mineral development landscape has changed significantly over the last eight years. It is facing new and substantial challenges, particularly since the 2008 economic downturn.

1530

Mining is a highly globalized business, and it is affected by trends such as commodity-priced fluctuations and worldwide demand for those commodities. Mining companies do indeed make key decisions based on these trends and very much with the cyclical nature of the industry in mind. The first thing I ever learned early on when I became minister was the cyclical nature of the industry.

Our government, may I say, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely prepared to meet those challenges and remains committed to supporting mineral development in the province. Our goal is to ensure that Ontario continues to be a world leader for mineral exploration and mining investment; and that means promoting mineral exploration and development in Ontario in a balanced manner, one that respects aboriginal and treaty rights, and private land-owners, while minimizing the impact of these activities on public health and safety, certainly, as well as the environment.

It really is why we've invested more than \$140 million in Ontario mineral sector activities to date; it's why we're continuing to modernize the Mining Act, ensuring that a fast and efficient system is in place to promote a dynamic and competitive business climate in Ontario; and it's why we've been clear in our commitment to invest \$1 billion in strategic infrastructure for the Ring of Fire—one of the largest and most significant new mining developments in Ontario's history.

Speaker, the mining industry works 365 days a year to provide Ontario with the building blocks of modern society. Meet the Miners designates one day to better appreciate the mineral sector for its role as a sector that is safe, high-tech, environmentally responsible, and that creates jobs and wealth for all Ontarians.

On behalf of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the province of Ontario, I am delighted to once again join the Ontario Mining Association for Meet the Miners. I want to extend an invitation to all members to a reception this evening, in rooms 228 and 230, starting around 5:30 p.m. This is really an extraordinarily important opportunity to learn about, and perhaps express appreciation for, a sector that is clearly essential to the provincial economy and the quality of life in the province of Ontario.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It is a pleasure to rise, on behalf of the PC caucus, on the statement by the Minister of Community and Social Services regarding the Select Committee on Developmental Services. I want to start by

saying, for people who don't understand the difference between standing committees and select committees, that select committees play a very unique and I think important role in our legislative process. It allows all of us from all three political parties who are represented in the House to come forward and discuss issues in a much broader way. To my point, the Select Committee on Developmental Services covers so many ministries that it would be almost impossible to do that when you're reviewing specific pieces of legislation.

Obviously, I was thrilled to be part of the committee. I think we did some excellent work and came forward with great recommendations. However, before we start hurting ourselves by patting ourselves on the back, we've got a long way to go.

One of the things that we heard from many of the people who presented—a phrase kept coming forward, no matter where we went across Ontario to listen to the deputations—family members, individuals, organizations who appeared to tell their stories—and that line was “falling off a cliff.” They were referencing the fact that when they left high school, 18 to 21, they literally felt like they were falling off a cliff, because there were no services available to them. We need to do a better job of that. The Ministry of Education has those numbers, can track those individuals, and we have to do a better job transitioning between one ministry and another. I think that we're moving in that direction.

But this select committee came about with a couple of starts and stops. We have to remember that this was actually a resolution brought forward by my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa, Christine Elliot, over two years ago, and who, when the House prorogued, had to bring it forward again in the early part of 2013. We really had a very limited amount of time to study what is a very serious issue and concern within the province of Ontario.

Having said that, I think we did a great job. I think that there are lots of ideas that the minister can take and run with. I hope that this is not the last update that we get on this report. I hope it is an ongoing process where we can continue to hear what the government is doing and how we are improving the services to people who have a developmental disability, because it is desperately overdue. As I say, I hope it's not the last time we get an update on it.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today on behalf of the PC caucus and the PC critic of northern development and mines and aboriginal affairs, Norm Miller. We welcome the Ontario Mining Association to Queen's Park and recognize mining day.

Established in 1920, the Ontario Mining Association represents the mining industry, with the mission to improve the competitiveness of the Ontario mining industry while promoting safety and sustainability.

Ontario is one of the safest mining jurisdictions in the world, and mining is one of the safest industries in

Ontario. Mining has been a staple of Ontario's economy for well over a century and it provides Ontarians with the everyday essentials that could be illustrated through the food we eat, fertilizers used by farmers, and materials used in everyday health care products, as well as items found in our homes, offices and roads.

The mining industry is an important driver of economic growth in Ontario, which can be seen in many communities across the province, such as Windsor, Goderich, Perth, Midland, Sudbury, Timmins, Red Lake, Kirkland Lake, Marathon and North Bay.

There are many economic contributions that can be seen from the mining industry, including revenue creation, international trade, and employment of highly skilled, highly paid jobs, and it is linked to many other industries in Ontario, which, in turn, creates many spinoff jobs.

More recently, the Ontario Mining Association released the key findings in a study completed by the University of Toronto called *An Authentic Opportunity: The Economic Impacts of a New Gold Mine in Ontario*. This study highlights the opportunities for new gold mines developed in Ontario. I'd like to personally commend the Ontario Mining Association for the release of this study to raise awareness of the benefits that mining and opening new mines will bring to the province of Ontario. The mining industry is not only an important asset to the province of Ontario but an essential part of our economy and history.

On behalf of the PC caucus and my colleague MPP Norm Miller, I want to thank all the members of the Ontario Mining Association for their good work in the mining industry and in ensuring that a high level of safety is maintained. Once again, thanks for joining us, and I look forward to seeing the members of the mining association at the reception later today.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to respond to the Minister of Consumer—sorry—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Community and Social Services.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Community and Social Services; thank you. I, like many of us, had three hours' sleep last night. We were working on municipal campaigns.

I want to say again that the select committee was a wonderful experience. It's one of the few opportunities I think we have to work in a non-partisan way to actually solve a problem. We certainly had a problem to solve, which is the treatment of those with disabilities in this province. Most are condemned to a life of poverty, as the minister knows well. Certainly, if you're on Ontario disability, you are living well below the poverty line in this province.

Over and over again, what we heard is that the waitlists must go; that if you need services, you need to

access those services as quickly as possible. There were some 46 recommendations in that select committee.

I hearken back to another select committee that did wonderful work too, which was the mental health and addictions committee, which made a number of recommendations as well. The problem there was that only three of those recommendations have actually been acted on.

I know that this minister will do better. I know that all 46 of the these recommendations will actually be acted on. I'm interested in what the rollout will be. I know that she has spoken in very general terms, but if she could send across to the critic the actual rollout of those 46 recommendations, that would be much appreciated.

I also want to say that I have a message from David Lepofsky—we all know who David Lepofsky is—for AODA. He again has submitted a freedom-of-information act request to Metrolinx. Why are they going ahead with plans for the Eglinton LRT that are going to be inaccessible? As transportation critic, this also hits home with me. The government was going to make him spend \$250 just to get the FOI. This is a person with disabilities representing those with disabilities. They don't have the money, Minister. The Premier waived that fee, and yet he's still waiting for that information. That's maybe minor in the great scope of things, but it's really important. It shows the ability of this government to respond to those with disabilities trying to work for those with disabilities. Right now, it's inaccessible; Metrolinx's plans are inaccessible.

**1540**

To get back to the select committee—I've only got five seconds left because I want to leave some time for my friend here to speak about mining and the wonderful world of it. But just to thank all those who worked on the select committee and, in particular, kudos to the member from Whitby—Oshawa, whose idea it was.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** First, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all those who have joined us for Meet the Miners Day. It is wonderful to have you here and to learn about all your projects and the important contributions of mining in both the country and the province.

I'm delivering these remarks on behalf of my colleague Michael Mantha, our critic for northern development and mines. He was unable to be here because he's presently meeting with mining industry representatives, with our caucus and with our team. As many of you know, over the last few years Michael has had the opportunity to tour the majority of mines in Ontario and has brought your concerns back to caucus and our leader.

Mining plays such an important role in our economy. It fuels cities and drives employment. As many of you know, I am the MPP for Sudbury. So many of the constituents I represent, so many of the families I know and so many of the workers in our city work in the mining industry, as do many of my family members who



immigrated here in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It is the heart of our city. Mining drives our local economy.

I look forward to also meeting with many of you tonight at the reception and over the coming months and years as we work together. While the mining industry makes enormous contributions in many sectors of our society, we hear too often of the struggles you are facing.

Last month, the minister wrote an editorial in the Sudbury Star claiming that the Liberal government is leading the way in driving development in the Ring of Fire and that significant progress has been made this year. After lack of action in the Ring of Fire and in countless other mining projects in our province, and a vague announcement on creating a development corporation, the Wynne government gave itself a deadline of 60 days to create the corporation that was to include partners from industry and First Nations. What the Wynne government produced, in order to meet its self-imposed deadline, was a board comprised of four government bureaucrats sitting around the table by themselves.

This government has failed to bring industry together. They have failed to bring First Nations together. The facts speak for themselves. Industry is unable to continue working under these conditions. Some have left, taking good jobs with them.

Northerners, First Nations and industries need less rhetoric from the government and more action to get shovels in the ground in the Ring of Fire. Thousands of jobs in communities across the north depend on it.

I thank you for coming today. My colleagues and I look forward to meeting with you and supporting your projects and working together to create the much-needed jobs.

## PETITIONS

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I have a petition that has been signed by people from right across this great province.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time

when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I support this petition. I'll affix my name to it and pass it along with Danielle to take to the Clerk.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

"Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport."

Speaker, I agree with this petition, I affix my name to it, and I'll give it to page Adam to bring forward to the Clerk.

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** This is a petition that's signed by a great number of people, not only from my riding but from a lot of ridings around it and from all over the province:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition on behalf of all the people who signed it.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the proposed changes to physiotherapy services in the province of Ontario effective August 1, 2013, will severely restrict the access to physiotherapy treatments for seniors who live in retirement homes; and

"Whereas these changes will deprive seniors and other eligible clients from the many health and mobility benefits of physiotherapy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the provincial government guarantees there will be no reduction in services currently available for seniors and people with disabilities who are currently eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign it and give it to Ben to be delivered to the table.

### CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition here that was compiled by David Brennan from Mississauga:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas childhood apraxia of speech is a rare neurological speech disorder that affects oral motor planning;

"Whereas an estimated 3% to 5% of the world's childhood population are diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas Ontario has excellent speech-language centres and programs that currently provide treatment for childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas children diagnosed in Canada with childhood apraxia of speech are eligible to receive the children's disability tax credit to assist with therapy costs;

**1550**

"Whereas greater public awareness of speech disorders and the benefits of early intervention speech-language therapy are needed in the province of Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to join the United States of America in declaring May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day."

I support this petition, and I sign it.

### ASTHMA

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas one in five children attending school in Ontario have asthma; and

"Whereas a severe asthma exacerbation can—as in the case of Ryan Gibbons's case—be fatal when a child does not have ready access to their relief medication; and

"Whereas practical steps can be taken to limit exposure to asthma triggers and ensure children have easy access to their prescribed medication; and

"Whereas Ryan's Law mandates that school boards and schools develop a comprehensive asthma plan that limits students' exposure to asthma triggers and have ready access to their medication to ensure all students can attend school in an asthma-friendly environment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to:

"Ensure that all members of provincial Parliament—particularly the respective party House leaders—make Ryan's Law a top legislative priority to ensure that it moves expeditiously through the committee review process and be brought back for third reading at the soonest possible date."

I agree with this petition, and I affix my signature to it.

### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition consisting of 2,300 names, all original signatures, gathered in part by Rona Ramsey, a fairly elderly lady from my riding—but it comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the specialized MS clinics in Ontario are in need of funding in order to continue to provide essential health care services to those living with multiple sclerosis;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:



"We strongly believe that the responsibility of providing health care to Canadians rests with the government and government-funded health care institutions. As a result, we urge the government to provide the essential funding for these clinics to continue operating.

"Over 20,000 Ontarians rely on the MS clinics to provide them with specialized care and expertise. The care, support and services that the MS clinics provide are absolutely essential to the MS community. The investment in MS clinics reduces the burden on the health care system by ensuring MS patients are able to visit or contact their MS clinic as opposed to relying on acute care."

I fully support this petition, the 2,300 people who signed it, and will ask the good page Faith to bring it to the Clerk.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I have a petition that I'd like to read.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition, I am affixing my signature, and I will pass it on to page Marie-Thérèse.

#### ASTHMA

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas one in five children attending school in Ontario have asthma; and

"Whereas a severe asthma exacerbation can—as in the case of Ryan Gibbons's case—be fatal when a child does not have ready access to their relief medication; and

"Whereas practical steps can be taken to limit exposure to asthma triggers and ensure children have easy access to their prescribed medication; and

"Whereas Ryan's Law mandates that school boards and schools develop a comprehensive asthma plan that limits students' exposure to asthma triggers and have ready access to their medication to ensure all students can attend school in an asthma-friendly environment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to:

"Ensure that all members of provincial Parliament—particularly the respective party House leaders—make Ryan's Law a top legislative priority to ensure that it moves expeditiously through the committee review process and be brought back for third reading at the soonest possible date."

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I affix my signature to it.

#### CREDIT UNIONS

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of the credit unions of Ontario and my good friends at the Windsor Family Credit Union, the WFCU.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows"....

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I agree with this petition. I will sign my name to it and present it to Danielle to take up to the Clerk.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario also has the highest average premiums in Canada;

"Whereas auto insurance rates are regulated by the Ontario government through the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO);

"Whereas Ontario insurance reforms in 2010 are saving companies almost \$2 billion in the value of 'statutory' accident payouts each year but the government is still allowing companies to increase drivers' premiums;

"Whereas it is unfair for drivers to pay higher premiums when the industry is enjoying billions in savings each year;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the government direct the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) to bring the average Ontario auto insurance premium down by 15%...."

I agree with this petition, sign it and will give it to Ben to deliver to the table.

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Again, I have a petition. I keep getting these from great numbers of people in my riding who have signed the petition. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition. I will affix my signature, as I agree with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. The time for petitions has expired.

1600

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014 / LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 23, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated Tuesday, October 28, 2014, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Flynn has moved second reading of Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a "no."

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

I have received a deferral slip. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), this vote will be deferred until tomorrow during deferred votes.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

### TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2014, on the motion for time allocation on the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** When this item of business was last debated, the member from London-Fanshawe had the floor. Member, you do have the floor, and you can continue with debating this issue.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker. I was waiting for you to sit down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** That's fine. I recognize the member from London-Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, thank you very much. I'm glad to continue the time that I have left on the clock and to contribute to this debate on Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act.

There was a little bit of confusion earlier, and I'm glad we got it straightened out because I really want to point out a few things on this bill that are very important.

When I started this morning, I think I used about five minutes. I was just on a roll there and getting started. My train of thought was going to be unravelling very logically and showing the pieces of the puzzle and how this bill really does not help consumers. What it does is it impacts consumers in a very detrimental way when it comes to their rights to sue under this act.

The first thing I went over was the fact that in the first part of this explanatory note that happens in the bill they talk about the towing and storage services and the High-



way Traffic Act. They talk about the dispute resolution system that really is the meat and potatoes of this bill with respect to how it's going to adversely affect consumers. Then they talk about the licensing of insurance agents, and repair and storage liens. There's a little bit in this bill—it seems like this government is actually combining bills to try to get through a lot of legislation in a very short time. We just came back to the House on October 20 and it seems like everything is being very rushed, especially when we're talking about constantly trying to negotiate debate times for members to speak to bills. But the government seems to take the preference of time allocation.

Going back to the bill, the first 23 pages are about the towing section of auto insurance and how the government has put legislation forward, feeling that the towing industry in the insurance sector really needs to be revamped. I agree that it does need to be revamped. It needs to be looked at so that people know what the cost is when their vehicles are being towed away—that their property isn't kept in that vehicle and held for ransom until they pay an exorbitant bill. That's something that I think we can agree with.

The other part of the bill, which is the dispute resolution process—it starts on page 24. What happened here is that Bill 15 is affecting how people can sue under insurance claims. Right now, this bill proposes to reduce the prejudgment interest rate applicable to court awards for damages for non-pecuniary loss. The proposed changes concern tort claims for pain and suffering made by innocent accident victims. So you're in an accident, it's not your fault, and you want to sue for non-pecuniary losses, and those would be things such as tort claims like pain and suffering.

One pecuniary loss is economic loss. For example, accident victims have a right to sue for economic loss, including 70% of net income before trial and 100% of their gross income after trial. The medical rehabilitation and related costs not covered by OHIP or the SABS, the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule, are covered if the injury meets the threshold for pain and suffering. So you have to prove your economic loss, and you can sue for that, but where the interest piece comes into play is pain and suffering. It's also known as non-pecuniary loss. Accident victims or their representatives may also sue for pain and suffering if the victim dies or sustains permanent and serious injury or disfigurement and/or impairment of an important physical, mental or psychological function. This wording is known as the verbal threshold.

Court awards for pain and suffering of less than \$100,000 are subject to a \$30,000 deductible and a \$15,000 deductible if there is an award under the Family Law Act for less than \$50,000. A lot of people don't realize that when you actually sue for pain and suffering, there is now imposed a deductible under their award, and one of the optional coverages under this new proposed accident benefits section in 2010 was that you could purchase to reduce your deductible. Again, a lot of

people really didn't foresee paying extra to lower the deductible if they were going to sue in the future, so people didn't really prepare, and that's something that was different that came out in 2010.

With regard to the prejudgment interest: "As a general rule, a successful plaintiff is entitled to prejudgment interest at the 'prejudgment interest rate.' In general terms, the 'prejudgment interest rate' is the Bank of Canada rate that prevailed at the time the lawsuit was filed. As of July 2014, this was 1.3%. Tort claims for 'pecuniary loss' (for example, lost business income) are subject to that general rule."

If you're suing because of pecuniary loss, loss of income, the insurance companies will be subject to 1.3% interest. That's the way it is now. Also, the way it is currently, the exception to that, is if you sue for a non-pecuniary loss, for example, the pain and suffering—this is the exception that's currently in the bill before this legislation came due:

"An exception to the general rule is created for claims for 'non-pecuniary loss' (pain and suffering). For these claims, the prejudgment rate of interest is the rate determined by the rules of court made by the Civil Rules Committee. Currently, the rate is 5%."

That's something in this bill that we're talking about today. The proposal is that we should be changing the interest rate to 1.3% across those two types of lawsuits, a pecuniary lawsuit and a non-pecuniary lawsuit. That doesn't make a lot of sense, because if you think about someone who is an accident victim, who is innocent and wants to sue for pain and suffering, the insurance companies have deep pockets and they can drag those things out for a very long time, which means victims of injuries can actually suffer a great financial loss.

We have found out from the depositions that have happened during this committee process, before we went to a majority government—I'll just quote from here:

"From the perspective of some accident victims groups and personal injury lawyers"—so we're looking not from the insurance company point of view to say, "Take my prejudgment interest down from 5% to 1.3%," because they're the ones that are going to benefit from that. That's a no-brainer. They're the ones that are going to benefit from a lower interest rate.

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The ones who aren't going to benefit are the victims, and this is what we had to say: The changes to the prejudgment interest rules will only encourage—and we said this—insurance companies to delay their settling of claims. Specifically, they say insurers will be happy to incur a 1.3% interest penalty while their money is earning much higher rates in the stock market and other investments.

If you think about it, what is the incentive? They don't have to rush to settle their claim or to go to court. They can actually keep their money in the bank and make more money on it. If we change the 5% to 1.3%, what's the

incentive? They're going to sit there and actually make money.

The victim, who is actually going to sue for pain and suffering, is continually having to endure that suffering because they don't have deep pockets like insurance companies.

"The Ontario Trial Lawyers Association ... is" truly "concerned about changes to the prejudgment interest rate in pain and suffering claims. Under the proposed legislation, the rate would be lowered," again, as we said, to 1.3% from 5%. "If this change is approved by the Legislative Assembly, insurers will be set to profit particularly in serious cases"—in serious cases, Speaker—"as they can earn greater returns by delaying settlement" etc.

It doesn't take a lot to figure out that this has nothing, absolutely zero, to do with insurance fraud—absolutely nothing. What's the motive? The *modus operandi*? I'm not a lawyer; Jagmeet from Bramalea-Gore-Malton is.

We actually have to really question why that little piece has snuck in here on page 24, and maybe page 25. I haven't gone through that particular piece where I found it specifically in the bill, at this point, but that's been buried quite a bit. What is the reason? I'd like an explanation. How does that help fight insurance fraud and lower consumer auto insurance rates? I would love an answer from this government.

I know I can't ask for a late show explanation on that, but if I could I would, because I'd like a comprehensive explanation from the Minister of Finance as to where that connects—lowering interest rates paid on judgment and reducing auto fraud and giving consumers a lower insurance rate. The answer: It does not. That really has nothing to do with this whole conversation. That's one thing I wanted to mention.

The other thing we had talked about early this morning—the member from Leeds-Grenville, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and the member from Nickel Belt talked about it—is the fact that this government wanted to time-allocate this bill so that other MPPs didn't have the opportunity to talk to this bill. I'm very proud and very honoured and humbled to be an MPP and stand here in this House and actually be able to bring the voices of the constituents of London-Fanshawe and talk to this government, reason with this government, try to negotiate with this government—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Good luck with that.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** —yes—about the bills and the changes that we would like to see forward to make things better.

When we time-allocate things, that's kind of contradictory to what we're all here for; it's almost like we're a punch clock. You're here for a six-and-a-half-hour debate. If you can't get your time in, if you can't get your voice in for your constituents, sorry, you lose.

When we had a minority government—I was a first-time MPP then—I can tell you that was the best kind of democracy that I would use as an example. Having a

majority government is a whole new world for us who served in 2011. I can tell you, Speaker, I like the minority government. The government was more apt to actually contribute, amend, negotiate and listen.

We could ask them to do all those things, but the ball now is in their court. If they don't want to play, I guess we just have to continually stand here and explain to the people of Ontario—people need to understand that even committee hours are being cut, and if we don't speak up and talk about that, nobody will know. They think it's actually par for the course, an everyday routine. It's absolutely not an everyday routine.

We had an awesome opportunity back in a minority government to travel the province and get people's feedback. It was a very interesting process, and when you have that process happen, you actually get bills that are going to make a difference to the people of Ontario, to the people of your riding. It's not about time allocation and rushing things through and getting all your accolades, "Wow, this government can make things happen." You're making things happen alone. You're not making things happen with the representation that's on this side of the House that really could give you some really good information.

Don't rush it. Sometimes things can't be rushed. We've agreed that there are some bills in this House that we can time-allocate. We all seem of the consensus that it is going to help the people. They're decent bills, somewhat decent bills; we can work with those. But for the ones that are really important to us, perhaps where we have something to contribute and say, a value to change for those people and those consumers, we need to be heard and we need to have democracy work in this House.

I wish, I hope—I don't know; I'm going to keep talking about how I think that I could get through to any of these members, and in your caucus meeting you can actually speak up and ask your whip and your House leader to go back and say, "You know what? Maybe that Armstrong was right. Maybe we should be listening to other people's voices." Because you have four years to hear what other people say—there were changes. Yes, you have a majority government and that's the way it ended up, this election. But you have four years to hear some of the changes that happened in Oshawa, Sudbury and Windsor West. Those were voices that were speaking to you then—and Niagara Falls too. They were speaking to you then.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** You weren't speaking to us at the budget.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** We did talk about the budget, and the member mentioned that. We don't always have to agree on everything, but you have to agree to hear us out in debates and committee.

I remember that I called someone, one of your MPPs, and someone recently told me that I was a very reasonable person to work with.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Absolutely.



**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I am, but we need democracy to make it happen. You can't be reasonable if you're not going to give us time to debate this bill in the robust manner that we're looking for. That's not reasonable. If we're willing to work with you, work with us. That's what I want to say.

I just think that in order for the consumers not to get hit even harder and if they really want to protect consumers and if they care about the people of Ontario who drive a vehicle, and their auto rates, and the kind of settlements they get, let's have some more debate on this so we can drive it home for them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm proud to end the debate today on behalf of our party with regard to the shutdown of democracy that this Liberal government is taking forth with this motion.

It was quite interesting, the member from Beaches–East York talking about how committee travel is nothing but a dog-and-pony show. It's unfortunate that this is the way the Liberal government tends to feel.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** There he is; he's still calling it a dog-and-pony show. I'm not sure if he's the dog or the pony.

However, I've worked on auto insurance in this Legislature for the last three years now, and general government has done quite a bit of research and committee hearings with the people of Ontario. In fact, this government allowed us to travel throughout the province to hear about auto insurance.

The problem is that we never, ever talked about the towing industry. It was never brought up, nor was it a discussion point on the agenda of these committees. I find it quite interesting that this government will allow us to travel and talk about auto insurance, unless we get to the towing part, regulating the towing industry throughout the province; then they shut down debate. They won't let this committee travel to hear the voice of people outside the GTA and Toronto where this bill is going to mightily affect, because again they're trying to use a blanket statement to cover all facts.

We see what happens when this government does that. We've seen it with the asthma policy in our school system, when they treat all medications as one blanket fits all. They can't do that. You can't do that. It doesn't fit in the school policy and it definitely does not fit when it comes to auto insurance. It's a very complex product in this marketplace. It's one of the highest amounts we pay throughout Canada. Unfortunately, when you shut down hearing from the people of Ontario outside of Toronto, to hear their concerns—because auto insurance affects them differently and, in particular with the towing industry, we have to hear what their voices have to say, because they will have comments that will actually make this piece of legislation that much better in order to serve everybody throughout Ontario.

I'm asking the government to come back off their motion, de-table the motion, un-table the motion so that we can have a proper democracy going forward. Let the committee travel throughout the province and hear the voices of the people of Ontario.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 6. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I've received a deferral slip requesting that the vote on government notice of motion number 6 be deferred until Wednesday, October 29, 2014. This vote will take place during deferred votes.

*Vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further orders of the day?

#### CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014 / LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** When this item of business was last debated, we had completed questions and comments on the debate by the member for York–Simcoe.

Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to discuss Bill 10, an act that revises child care legislation here in Ontario. I first rose to address this bill in its previous incarnation in the spring. There are many points I made then that I will be touching back on again today.

Before I proceed, I want to recognize the work of my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain, Miss Monique Taylor, who called last summer for the Ombudsman to investigate the state of unlicensed child care

in this province. I want to note, as well, that the Ombudsman rose to that occasion and provided us with a report last week about the oversight of unlicensed child care. I want to read Miss Taylor's response to the Ombudsman's report.

She said: "Last year, I requested that the Ombudsman conduct an investigation into the government's oversight of unlicensed child care. Today's scathing report is deeply disturbing for parents like me. It reveals that this Liberal government has systematically failed to do its job to protect kids in unlicensed child care. This isn't just about an old law that doesn't work; it's about a government that has put kids at risk through 'years of bad administration and neglect,' in the words of the Ombudsman. From complaints that go uninvestigated, to sloppy records and toothless inspections, it's hard to see how the government could do a worse job.

"Parents deserve far better. No family should fear for their" children's "safety at child care. The Liberals need to act on the Ombudsman recommendations and ensure inspectors can do their job. Most importantly, this report reveals the need to build a true system of licensed, not-for-profit child care that can meet the needs of Ontario's families so that no family is forced to turn to illegal daycares. New Democrats will hold this government accountable for their record and will continue to advocate for the necessary changes to protect the children of this province."

She went on to say, "I ... thank the Ombudsman and his staff for their thorough investigation and recommendations."

Speaker, I just want to make a distinction here. There are informal daycares that are not licensed that operate within the law and there are daycares that are unlicensed, informal and operate outside of the law—a very important distinction. I meet many moms, parents, in their homes with one or two other children who are looking after them and providing good care. That exists. I know that sometimes when I've had discussions with people there has been a confusion between informal and illegal. They are very distinct things; very, very distinct.

The Ombudsman deserves credit for his report, as do his staff, who did an excellent, thorough and thoughtful investigation. As you're well aware, Speaker, the Ombudsman's investigation began after four children died in the GTA in the space of just seven months last year. The Ombudsman has made an unprecedented number of recommendations—113 in total—to address the gaps and improper practices he uncovered in his investigation. He called on the government to take urgent action to protect children in unlicensed daycares because he found systemic government ineptitude that has put kids at risk for years.

It is startling and it is distressing for all of us, and to every parent and grandparent in Ontario, for the Ombudsman to describe the government's approach to child care regulation as "sloppy," "inconsistent," "inadequate," "poor" and "alarming." I want to take a few minutes this afternoon, before discussing the substance of the bill, to

actually walk through some of his findings and recommendations.

First, I recognize that the government has started to make changes. Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, is an important step to overhaul the Day Nurseries Act. I note, Speaker, that I say "important" rather than "perfect." I imagine that we will have extensive debates on this bill. I imagine that in committee there will be points of view, concerns and observations brought forward by those in the child care community that will affect the substance of the bill. I hope that the government is open to amendments that will make this bill far more useful for the people of Ontario.

I also recognize and acknowledge that the Ministry of Education has taken steps, since the transition of child care from the previous ministry in 2012, to address some of the problems the Ombudsman found. I appreciate the work that the minister's staff and the ministry staff have taken to come to grips with the problems before us. I recognize that the ministry has accepted all of the Ombudsman's unprecedented 113 recommendations. I note, however, that the Ombudsman wrote that those efforts are, in his opinion, "too little, too late."

There is no question, Speaker, that the existing legislation is outdated. If I remember correctly, it was first introduced and put in place in the 1940s. But that is hardly the only problem. Tools are only useful if a government is willing to use them. For far too long, this government has not properly used the tools that it does, in fact, have. As the Ombudsman says, the ministry need not wait for the new law—that's Bill 10—to pass to start making long-overdue changes.

I think this is an important consideration. Bills are only part of the mix when you're dealing with a specific social issue. Bills give a government powers to act. They set down a framework for action on the part of those who are providing child care. But, far beyond that, one needs to have in place administrative mechanisms and enforcement mechanisms. One has to have investment. Government has to see this in a complete and systemic way. Simply the passage of a bill is not enough to actually deal with a broad variety of problems. Bills are passed and essentially allowed to sit on library shelves or on computer servers somewhere for many decades. If ignored, they have no impact on the world around us or the problems that people are dealing with. This bill may become a useful piece of legislation, but it's going to have to be useful in the context of a larger effort on the part of the government to address the problems before us.

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At paragraph 117, the Ombudsman writes, "Many of the gaps and inefficiencies in the child care licensing program are not necessarily products of outdated legislation, but of years of bad administration and neglect"; again, not just a question of legislation, but a question of administration, of commitment of resources, of a commitment on the part of the government to actually address a problem.



Bill 10 will help to fix the outdated legislation, we hope, with a number of amendments, but it cannot reverse 10 years of bad administration and neglect under this government. To ensure we don't have another 10 lost years will require investment and commitment, not just the introduction of laws.

The Ombudsman comments that each day, an estimated 823,000 school-aged children under the age of 12 spend time at an unlicensed home care. That's in addition to an untold number of infants and toddlers who receive care in unlicensed child care centres.

This report is scathing about what has happened in this past decade. It's hard to see how the government could have done a worse job for the past 10 years, said the Ombudsman. He even said, "The government of Ontario should also use the example of this program and its transfer" to the Ministry of Education "as a cautionary tale for all levels of management in the Ontario public service."

We have an area here of significant public interest that has been badly mismanaged. In 2012, the Ministry of Education received 274 complaints about unlicensed child care facilities. In 2013, that number doubled to 526 complaints about unlicensed child care. The Ombudsman found that "the process for responding to complaints about unlicensed daycares was patently defective." That's an extraordinary thing to say. It isn't just this government that says that children are extraordinarily important; I would say every member of this Legislature recognizes the importance to this society and to our families of our children. And yet, when children are in a situation where they may be at risk, we have not had an adequate system for responding to complaints, for making sure that those children are safe and well cared for.

He writes this as well: "It is inconceivable in this electronic age that regulatory activity that impacts the health and safety of children has been monitored for years by such archaic means." He writes that the practice around requiring a complaint before launching an investigation is "ridiculous" and a "meek enforcement style."

He says that the ministry clearly dropped the ball. "Its failure to enforce the Day Nurseries Act left unscrupulous individuals free to provide illegal child care, and placed scores of children at risk in an overcrowded, unsanitary and unsafe environment. Unfortunately, the ministry's abysmal response to complaints ... was not an isolated occurrence." As one parent in this building, a reporter, said to me, she found the report of the Ombudsman extraordinarily chilling.

According to the Ombudsman, while the Ministry of Education has initiated improvements, "In my opinion, its delayed, inconsistent and incomplete response to complaints and concerns relating to unlicensed child care providers is unreasonable and wrong under the Ombudsman Act."

Speaker, we're talking about a very large-scale failure of public administration here, a letting down of families

across Ontario, a lack of concern for, regard for, the safety of our children.

The Ombudsman goes on to talk about inspections. Frankly, you can have as many rules and laws as you want. If you don't have people who can go out and inspect, find out and determine whether people are respecting those laws and then take action to enforce, then the bill is effectively a dead letter, a well-written piece of legal material that has no force or effect.

The Ombudsman notes that the ministry has six regional offices to conduct inspections. Employees are called program advisers, not inspectors, and it means they have difficulty figuring out whether their job is to advise people or actually conduct inspections.

Now, I can see the utility of having advisers. It makes sense to me to have people who are trained, who can go out and talk to people who are administering daycare centres, home daycare, and actually help them move along and provide higher quality care. But we need to be very clear that we need more than advice; we need people who will investigate to see whether or not there is compliance with the law.

There are only 49 permanent program advisers and 15 temporary program advisers in Ontario. These are the only people responsible for inspecting licensed child care, daycare agencies and unlicensed sites. Remember, Speaker, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of children. That is spreading inspections very thin, very thin indeed.

I note that one of the responses of the ministry is to say that six investigators are going to be assigned to beef up this complement. I'm not a person with a law enforcement background. I don't know the technical details of what ratio you need to be truly effective, but I have to say, speaking as a layperson, 50 or 60 people to look after the safety of hundreds of thousands doesn't seem reasonable to me. It doesn't seem reasonable to me.

One of the things that the Ombudsman touched on was the importance of investment in the child care sector. He noted parents are only forced to use unlicensed child care because there are so few licensed child care spaces in this province. That is indeed the case, Speaker. I talk to parents on a regular basis who want the highest quality care for their children. Often, because there isn't a lot of information about it—certainly not the same amount of information as there is about restaurant inspections—they don't know whether centres are licensed properly or unlicensed.

I had a situation in my riding a few years ago: a three-storey house, totally unlicensed child care, at least 30 children—five to six infants in cribs on the third floor. Because fire inspectors had been in and declared the building was safe, from their fire perspective, parents thought that things were fine, but in fact it was an unlicensed centre. If there had been a fire, and happily there was not, I don't know how they would have gotten the infants off the third floor.

Parents don't have the same information about child care that we have as restaurant-goers: the ability to see

posted notices from the department of public health saying whether or not a restaurant has been inspected and passes the inspection.

Jane Mercer of the Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care, a long-time activist and veteran in this sector, said in the *Star* in the spring, "Governments have known for decades that there is a whole underground system in child care that they have actively chosen to ignore. The fact that they have chosen not to look at it for so long is" because "they haven't wanted to pay for the (licensed) child care system families need." And she's right.

In addition to this bill, this government needs to invest in licensed not-for-profit child care. That has got to be the core of the solution to the problem that families in Ontario are facing. The government also needs to invest in its staff resources to ensure that investigators can do their job.

Recommendation 4 from the Ombudsman: "The Ministry of Education should ensure that it has adequate resources to properly administer and effectively enforce the Day Nurseries Act." Speaker, I've touched on this a few times. The Ombudsman touched on it. It is a critical piece. A bill needs people who will ensure that its legal provisions are actually carried out.

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Ministry officials told the Ombudsman that they were drowning under the volume of work when he was carrying out his investigation. One staff member said, "We're so busy ... It's not that we don't want children to be protected, but please don't go out looking for them because we can't handle what we have now."

What does that say, Speaker? What does that say about the priority of safety for the children in this province when the people who have responsibility for enforcement effectively are saying, "Don't bring me any new problems. I can't handle the ones I'm dealing with now"? It's a very substantive statement.

I want to touch on one last piece of the puzzle that the Ombudsman addressed. He had some disturbing comments about how the ministry treats parents. He found that parents "are generally disregarded and relegated to a minor role ... Ministry officials told us they do not normally contact parents to obtain information about their children and daycare schedules," when they are conducting an investigation into a child care provider. The Ombudsman found that the ministry neglected to engage parents in the enforcement process and tended to avoid them all together.

Now, I'm glad that this bill does include a provision so that parents will be able to enter child care centres at any time to ensure their child is safe. That is a positive step forward. I would ask, though, that the ministry also take steps to address this point that was raised by the Ombudsman: the necessity to keep parents in the know rather than keeping them in the dark.

Now, the work of the member for Hamilton Mountain, Monique Taylor, and the work of André Marin is very powerful background to the discussions of many issues that are before us with regard to this bill. I want to

acknowledge the work they did, but I also want to acknowledge the work of Andrea Calver, the former executive director of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, and the coalition itself. They have been—I think the correct word is "relentless"—in the work they've done to try and improve the situation of children, parents and child care providers in this province.

A number of points were raised by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care in their assessment of this bill and of changes to regulations around child care ratios that are going on independently of this bill.

As you are well aware, Speaker, families across this province feel squeezed, and they feel squeezed because in fact they are squeezed. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives produced a report this year about the income gap in this country, which is reflected quite faithfully in Ontario, and that's that half the income goes to 20% of the population and 80% of the population lives on the other half of the income. That means very large numbers of people find it hard on a regular basis to pay their bills, to keep their noses above water, to have stability in their lives.

One of the most significant pressures facing young families is the cost and availability of child care. Parents get frantic about encountering waiting lists that they know will mean their child will never get into a licensed daycare centre, being told it will be 10 years. Talking to young parents, whose common word of advice to other young parents is, "Register when you're thinking about getting pregnant. Don't wait for pregnancy, register real early. When you think it might not be a bad idea to have children at some point in your life, register then."

They're concerned about the cost because, frankly, at the going rate of \$1,000 and up per month per child, if you have two or three children in care, that is bigger than your rent bill, bigger than your mortgage. You're paying an extraordinary amount of money. They worry about the safety of their children and there is no getting around it: We've seen deaths in child care provider situations, as the Ombudsman has noted. But beyond those deaths—so tragic and so extraordinarily painful for the families involved and for everyone who is in any way immediately touched by them—there's the anxiety that it provokes in parents themselves. They will read newspaper articles and they will see clips on television and they'll start to second-guess themselves: "Is my child safe? Did I make the right decision? Do I really understand who these people are and the quality of care they're providing?" That's an anxiety, in addition to the cost and availability issues, that we are called on, as legislators, to address.

This past summer, I was going door to door, talking to some of my constituents, and came across a young family. They were living in Riverdale, so my guess is, they have a pretty big mortgage. Both of them needed to work. They didn't have any choice. The reality was, they could not find a licensed child care spot. Even if they were willing to pay more, they couldn't find one. They found an unlicensed spot, and as much as they liked the child care provider, the home care provider, they were



anxious because there wasn't an independent oversight. That, Speaker, is something that gnaws at people, that makes them feel uncertain from day to day. They said to me, "As many problems as we have trying to balance the books to make our house work, this is one issue that we profoundly need government to address," so that they, going to work, don't feel anxious; so that they feel comfort and confidence that their child will be well looked after and safe.

In my own riding of Toronto—Danforth, we have nearly 10,000 families with about 15,000 children. That's 7,000 children aged zero to five and over 4,000 kids under age 14 who live below the low-income cut-off. Approximately 28% of the children in my riding are living in families under the low-income cut-off. That's a lot of children in poverty, in need, whose families face multiple stressors—child care, or lack of it, more to the point, being one of the big stressors that they face.

Approximately 2,500 single-parent families are in my riding with median incomes of less than \$30,000 per year—large numbers of people facing very difficult circumstances, driven by economic necessity to place their child wherever they can find an opening; licensed or unlicensed, formal or informal, legal or illegal.

I'll just say, a few years ago, in another instance, I was going door to door and came across a family with two parents working. They were, I would say, lower-middle income. Two days before, the child care centre where they had taken their child was revealed to be an illegal centre, with something like 15 or 20 children in there. Inspectors acted correctly: They said, "You can't do this. You can't have an illegal centre." But suddenly you had 15 families scrambling to find a spot. They were desperate. They were more angry at the ministry for taking action than they were at the child care operator, because they just couldn't get anything else. They had to have some care.

In the minister's opening remarks at second reading of the predecessor bill, Bill 143, the minister said, "Ontario's children and families cannot wait any longer.... They cannot wait for us to strengthen oversight in the child care sector. They cannot wait for access to safe, modern care that gives children what they need most." In this, I agree with the minister: Families, parents and children cannot wait. But I'm not sure, and my colleagues are not sure, that the bill, as it's currently written, actually addresses the problem that we see in the child care sector, which is why, Speaker, I refer to a need to have this discussion in committee, to have discussions between all three parties, on an ongoing basis, to find ways to improve this bill.

1650

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care issued a statement on February 28 of this year: "Ontario needs a stronger system of public and not-for-profit child care: Let's do it right!" They talk about the proposed amendments to regulation 262.

Now, I have to say, Speaker, for those who are watching this debate, that what we have before the Legislature

is a bill, but what is also being considered at the same time, by the minister and the Ministry of Education, are regulations that would have substantive and far-reaching impact on the quality of care in this province. Those regulations are not before us for debate, but, Speaker, as we discuss this bill, these regulations have to be in our mind, and, in fact, I think they have to be part of the discussion because they will have very substantial impact.

I want to quote from the Ontario coalition's statement. They recommend that the following actions be taken prior to implementing changes to regulation 262—the regulation that doesn't have to be debated here, but which will, on its own, have far-reaching consequences for the child care sector. They recommend: "A full review of the issues facing early learning and child care programs, with an opportunity for information sharing and consultation with academics, sector leaders and families."

I think they're quite correct in saying that the regulation needs to be put aside while further discussion takes place. This regulation has received many comments from the public. In discussions I've had with the minister, she's said that people have been talking to her. I think those comments have to be made available to the rest of us, so that we, in an informed way, can debate and make suggestions for changes to this government.

The Ontario coalition also said that what was needed was "a full review of the infrastructure of the early years sector and the required supports to build capacity and quality in order to implement change in a consistent, thoughtful manner."

Again, Speaker, bills are not enough, regulations are not enough. There is physical infrastructure, financial investment, a commitment to actually making the system work, that goes beyond a bill, goes beyond a debate in this chamber, in order to ensure that we have the child care that our families need. When we pass bills in this chamber, we give government a set of guidelines, a framework, within which they can operate. But all bills have their limits.

This bill, in whatever form is finally passed, and regulation 262, in whatever form that's finally presented and made law, are going to make substantial changes in the child care sector in Ontario. There are thousands in the formal and informal sector who are going to be going through a transition, and I think it's incumbent on the government to talk about, in this debate, exactly what their strategy is to make that transition.

Many of you were here, I think, for the whole process of rolling out full-day kindergarten. I think that full-day kindergarten makes a lot of sense. It's very popular with my constituents. But I have to say to you, Speaker, the way that it was rolled out caused a lot of stress and a lot of confusion. There was not clarity on how different pieces of the sector would be dealt with. There was a lot of anxiety on the part of parents and those who work in the child care sector as to what was going to come next.

When I deal with people in the child care sector—and I have to say, I was at a meeting earlier this year at

Dandylyon Childcare Centre in my riding. I was meeting with the board members at 5:30 in the afternoon. We were all sitting in these incredibly small chairs over not a bad pizza with about 10 kids orbiting us loudly. It was an intriguing conversation because every so often one of the board members had to reach out and grab a child so that no damage was done to the child or to the daycare centre—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Or to the pizza.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Or to the pizza—no, the kids had their own food table. They were fine. They would grab food and run. We were safe. Our pizza was under control.

But what I found there and what I find everywhere in the child care sector is things operating so tightly.

It's quite a contrast for me to be the energy critic and the education critic. Both the education side and the energy side have areas where there are a lot of resources. A lot of money flows through the energy sector and a lot is spent on education, but I have to say that it's when I get to child care that I find that really it's just rubber bands and paper clips holding everything together. That's a huge problem. This is a significant sector. Its success will have real impact on all our lives and the lives of all our families. There is going to have to be more investment in this system.

I want to go on to other comments by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. They write: "Further, we believe that legislative and regulatory changes should not be implemented to save money but based on the articulated principles outlined in the Early Years Policy Framework. Building an early learning and child care system on these principles will make positive change for the children and families of Ontario. It will also respect the important work of our registered early childhood educators."

I think it's incumbent on all of us here to take in the recommendations of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and have them shape our approach to this bill and the regulations that are being considered in other forums. Keep them in mind when we go to clause-by-clause debate on this bill.

I want to note that this bill will be affected by increasing the number of children that are looked after by each early childhood educator. This bill increases the maximum number of children in licensed home care from five to six. As many as 12 children under the age of two can receive care from two providers working together.

The concurrent proposed regulation changes will increase the size of groups for younger children. Children as young as 13 months will be able to be in groups of five kids to one staff, which is an increase in group size of 66%. This is a huge concern to parents and people in the child care advocacy sector. This debate on this bill is really our only chance to talk to this regulation, which, as I've said earlier, is of great consequence.

I want to take a few statements from briefing notes that have been put out by the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. People will be familiar with the name Martha Friendly, who has been an advocate for child care

for decades and, frankly, is widely respected; someone who, when she speaks, everyone involved in the child care sector should be sitting up and listening to.

She writes: "Why is child care quality important? Child development research makes it clear that the importance of quality of early childhood programs cannot be overstated. If children are to benefit from them, early childhood education and child care programs must be high quality; poor quality early childhood education may be negative for children."

She goes on to say, "While no one structural feature alone can predict quality, the research shows that staff-child ratios (adults to children) are one of the most important elements of quality, especially for younger children. Overall, the research finds that fewer children per adult ... are associated with higher global quality scores; more interaction between staff and children; more responsive caregiving; better academic, cognitive and social outcomes."

And ratios have a direct impact on the staff themselves—on working conditions, on the morale, on the ability of people to be recruited and retained.

Martha Friendly goes on to say: "The research also shows that it is particularly important for younger age groups—infants and toddlers—to be cared for in child care settings with better ratios and group sizes."

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit goes on to look at the proposed ratio-to-group-size changes and what it means for young children. Currently, they write, "An infant between one and one and a half years may not be walking or eating independently and is likely to be in diapers. She is currently in an infant room with nine other babies and three adults," at least one with ECE—an early childcare education—training certificate. What's proposed: "Under the new ratio/group sizes: She could be in a room with 14 other babies, between one and two years, with three staff, at least one with the ECE"—early childhood education—"training."

1700

Speaker, I have been in rooms with large numbers of 12-month-olds, and frankly, it's pretty chaotic. I see the member has had similar experience. She knows whereof I speak.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** You're being polite.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I'm being very polite.

These ratios have got to be gotten right. If you've got too many infants, 12-month-olds, in a room, you are not going to have adequate, proper care for those children. They are not going to get the developmental support that they need, and frankly, the adults who are in the room are going to be fried. We've got to consider both sides of that equation. When people who work in this field, who do the academic research, who are in touch with child care centres, warn loudly that these ratios are highly problematic, we need to pay attention to that. The minister needs to pay attention to that.

Another example: Currently, "A toddler between two and two and a half years is in diapers or toilet training, walking but not yet cautious about danger and not yet



comfortable with always ‘using words’ to settle a dispute about a toy.” We’ve all seen toys used to beat others about the head. That child would now be “in a toddler room with 14 others between one and a half and two and a half years with three staff, (at least) one with ECE training.” That’s currently.

“Proposed: Under the new ratio/group sizes, he could be in a room with 23 other toddlers and preschoolers between two and four years with three staff, two of whom are” early childhood educators, “or in a room with 15 others with two staff, (at least) one with” early childhood education “training.” Speaker, those are very substantial changes in ratio.

It’s been interesting to me to have not only people like Martha Friendly express concern about these ratios but, frankly, having unlicensed providers in my riding who have had a long history of providing home care come in and say, “I don’t work in those centres, but the ratios that I’m hearing about don’t sound like they will work.” It was said to me that they deal with a lot of infants; they deal with a lot of toddlers: “That would be very, very difficult for anyone to manage, and I can’t see it working for those children.” So it’s not only those who have a long history of working in the field as academics, as managers, but also those who, on a day-to-day basis, look after children in their own homes, saying that the ratios that the ministry has been talking about would be extraordinarily problematic.

In Ontario right now, there’s a regulated full- or part-time centre-based space for about 20% of the children under age five. Only 14% of children under age 13 have access to licensed child care options, according to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care; 25% of child care is owned by private for-profit organizations. There are approximately 10,000 licensed spaces for infants under 18 months, but according to the ministry’s own figures, approximately 43,000 children under the age of 12 months enter child care each year, and another 55,000 enter child care after 12 months of age. This means there are at least 98,000 infants competing for just 10,000 licensed spaces each year—one space for every 10 infants.

I talked earlier about how parents have spoken to me about their difficulties, their anxiety about not being able to get a space: women who have taken maternity leave, desperate to get good care so they can get back to work; fathers who have taken paternity leave, and between the two parents, they’re trying to work out who is going to go back to work and who isn’t.

Last summer, the summer of 2013, I was dealing with an issue at Children’s Circle Day Care in my riding. A child care centre was set up a few decades ago by a dedicated group of parents, as a non-profit, with very high-quality child care—it serves local schools Jackman and Withrow—and as part of the transition to full-day kindergarten, they had applied to the city of Toronto for money to reconfigure space so they could take in infants.

We ran into some problems in definitions with the city. Everyone worked hard to resolve it. Ultimately it

was resolved, and the infant spaces went ahead. What was extraordinary to me was that on a hot summer night in July, in a packed church hall, people were trying to sort this out and understand what was going to happen with the potential for infant care; and the number of totally desperate parents who were just on pins and needles at the thought that this wouldn’t go through. The need for care is profound.

Again, it is good for us to have this bill before us. It’s good for us to debate this bill. It’s good for us to work to improve this bill. But it’s going to take more than a bill to deal with the anxiety of parents. It’s going to take a commitment from this government, and not just the current government but governments that will be in this province for decades to come—a commitment from all of them to our families and our children.

My former colleague from Davenport spoke about this in the spring when we were discussing Bill 143, and I’ve seen it myself. A few years ago, I went through my riding, and there’s a section between Mortimer and Sammon east of Greenwood. Very few people in this room will know exactly what that geography is, but it’s mostly smaller bungalows built post World War II. It was basically the beginnings of that community as it moved north from the Danforth in East York. As I went door to door to door, I saw baby buggy after baby buggy, swing set after swing set, and new parent after new parent come to the door. I called it the baby belt, and that’s how we understood it in my office. There was a baby belt there in the north part of the riding.

That was a few years ago. Earlier this year—

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Now it’s the toddler belt.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** That part’s the toddler belt, but the baby belt has, as it were, reproduced itself in other parts of the riding. There are a lot of babies coming.

An awful lot of people, an awful lot of the next generation, are coming to the door these days with newborns in arms and asking, “Where’s the child care centre I need so I can go to work so I can pay for my house, so I can make sure that when this child gets older, they can go to university and get the education that they need?”

There’s a daycare subsidy waiting list in this province that is too long. Parents in many parts of this province, including Toronto and Ottawa, need to put their names on the subsidy waiting list as soon as they learn they’re pregnant. I referenced that earlier. They have to do that as soon as possible if they want to have any hope of getting a space so they can return to work. Even then, they may well be out of luck.

In Toronto, as of November 2013, there were only 3,600 vacant licensed spaces, but over 17,800 names on the waiting list for a child care fee subsidy. In Hamilton in March of this year, there were 1,028 children on the subsidy wait-list. My guess is if you went to other urban centres, if you went to Niagara Falls, if you went to London—frankly if you went across town to Parkdale—High Park, or to Kitchener-Waterloo, you’d find similar wait-lists and a similar difficult situation.

People who need those subsidies are in great difficulty. Those who are making more money, with difficulty, can pay a thousand bucks a month. Those who are working in precarious work or otherwise low-paid work are facing huge difficulties if they want to ensure their children are looked after properly.

We have to look after that end, the subsidy end, the investment end on the part of the province, but we also need to be addressing the whole question of low wages for staff. Low wages and not enough opportunity for advancement are serious problems affecting the child care sector. According to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the average wage of a child care worker is just \$16 per hour. That is extraordinary, Speaker. These are responsible positions. These are people who are trained. These are people who have young lives literally in their hands—\$16 an hour. In the words of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario and the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, “The child care workforce, earning low wages and benefits, is already struggling in an environment offering little support.” This poses significant challenges for recruitment and retention of qualified, educated and experienced staff. Frankly, when I go and talk to people who run non-profit child care, and my guess is it’s the same in the for-profit sector, they have people on staff who are capable, but always on the lookout for better work because they find it very difficult to live on the wages that they’re being paid. This is an issue that this province is going to have to address. We’re talking about the people who have charge of our children, who have responsibility for helping those children develop, learn and grow their ability socially and intellectually—multiple, multiple stressors on families, parents and child care workers, and some serious consequences.

1710

The Ombudsman, in his report, talked about a number of deaths in unlicensed centres. I want to remind everyone in this chamber, as we debate this bill, that the need for enforcement, for regulation, is of consequence.

On July 28, 2010—that’s over four years ago—two-year-old Jérémie Audette drowned at an unlicensed daycare in Ottawa. Jérémie was brought by his private home daycare provider to a group outing at another home care provider’s backyard. The inquest heard that there were 30 children and four to six adults at the home. Jérémie’s death was ruled accidental, but the 2012 inquest made a number of recommendations about how to make unlicensed child care safer for children. The inquest jury made 16 recommendations, including the following—and, Speaker, I believe we should be keeping those inquest recommendations in mind as we go through this bill:

They suggested that the ratios of adults to children should be the same at unlicensed home child care providers as at licensed providers.

They recommended that all unlicensed private home daycares, regardless of licensing, should be registered with the ministry. The registry would enable all child

care providers to be informed of any changes in the Day Nurseries Act, safety notices or training.

They noted that all registered daycares, including unlicensed private home daycare facilities, should be subject to unannounced safety inspections.

They recommended that, as part of registration, private home care operators must demonstrate that they possess current, appropriate first aid and CPR training to respond to potential emergency situations.

They recommended that the ministry establish additional criteria for staff-child ratios for off-site excursions to ensure that all children are properly supervised “in an environment of increased risk.”

They recommended that the Ministry of Education publish information regarding the differences between licensed and unlicensed private home daycares, and make it available at libraries and medical facilities.

These are not earth-shattering recommendations, but very practical ones. Many parents don’t have the knowledge of the difference between licensed, unlicensed, formal and informal care.

In January 2011, 14-month-old Duy-An Nguyen died at an unlicensed Mississauga daycare. The provider was charged with murder.

On July 4, 2013, Allison Tucker, age two, was found dead in an unlicensed child care in North York. Her provider was charged with manslaughter, and the case is before the courts.

The case most significantly explored by the Ombudsman was that of two-year-old Eva Ravikovich, who died July 2013 at an unlicensed home daycare in Vaughan. The daycare was illegally overcrowded. There were at least 35 children registered at the Vaughan daycare, and when police arrived, they reportedly found 27 children. The ministry had failed to investigate four complaints. Eva’s parents are now suing the Ministry of Education, alleging government negligence was a factor in Eva’s death. In January 2014, the ministry asked that the lawsuit be dismissed. In the notice of motion filed with the court, the ministry says it “does not owe the plaintiff a duty of care,” because that facility was unlicensed and unregulated.

In November 2013, a nine-month-old baby, Aspen Juliet Moore, died at an unlicensed child care facility, the third death in an unlicensed child care within that past year.

The ministry apparently does not have a central repository for these sorts of incidents so that one could track them. As much as I don’t want there to be any incidents reported, so that a registry would not be necessary, at this point I think it’s reasonable to say that there should be a registry so that people can track the numbers, the statistics.

In October 2013, Halton regional health officials said they still don’t know if the Ministry of Health takes any action when they forward complaints about child care facilities. Do they pass these on to the Ministry of Education? That is something that we need to know about. If there isn’t a protocol in place, there should be a



protocol in place. If the department of public health finds that a facility is dirty, unhealthy, and is functioning as a child care centre, licensed or unlicensed, at the same time, there should be a protocol for reporting to the regulator, now the Ministry of Education.

Speaker, just a last word about inspections. Licensed centres are monitored by provincial personnel on an annual basis, but inadequate oversight of unlicensed child care is a major problem. The ministry doesn't track unlicensed daycares and is only supposed to visit them if someone formally complains.

In 40% of cases of complaints about unlicensed home daycares, inspectors found the providers were in violation of the Day Nurseries Act because they had too many children in their home; that is, more than five under the age of 10. As I've said earlier, Speaker, it's not just a question of having a rule or regulation in place. We have rules and regulations in place. We don't have enough people to go out and enforce what we already have in place. Fifty to 60 people for hundreds of thousands of children, probably thousands of installations, thousands of set-ups—that ratio appears to have been inadequate, and we need to hear from the government how they will address that as we go forward.

Speaker, we need regulation of child care in this province. We need investment in child care in this province. We need investment in regulation of child care. I say to the minister that she was acting responsibly in bringing forward a bill. I hope that we will have the opportunity in committee to hear from all of the stakeholders. I hope that improvements to the bill are considered seriously by all three parties and that, where there is an opportunity to make this bill more effective, it is made more effective. But I also say a bill is not enough. Investment, commitment—those things have to be part of the process as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments? I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you. I'm very pleased to respond to the comments from the member for Toronto-Danforth, and because he concentrated on other issues in child care, I will do the same.

First of all, my 18-month-old grandson is one of your baby boom constituents.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I know.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** So we have a mutual interest here.

I want to also make it clear that I concur with the remark that the member opened with, that the vast majority of unlicensed home care providers, informal home care—whatever you want to call it—actually do a great job. I had my own children in unlicensed child care more often than not. So that's not the issue. The issue is, when they break the rules, what happens.

The Ombudsman made a very thorough report. Sixty of those recommendations which we have already met fall outside Bill 10. I want to mention some of those.

1720

Number one: We have actually established a dedicated enforcement unit—that is, people whose sole responsibility is responding to complaints or knowledge of

unlicensed home child care. If they find that there is a confirmed violation, we have now created an online searchable website where those violations will be posted, which means that if a parent is looking for informal child care, they can go to the website and see whether that particular provider has violated the act. We also have established a 1-800 call number where people can call and lodge a complaint. You don't have to track down the ministry's regional office anymore. And the training is consistent with the suggestions of the Ombudsman.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions or comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to comment on the speech from my honourable colleague from Danforth.

This Bill 10: We've got some real concerns about it, and our critic Garfield Dunlop, the member from Simcoe North, has articulated them extremely well.

The potential exists for 140,000 children to be without child care under this bill because they're not listening to what the people are saying. You can't just take this brush—the minister just said that the vast majority of folks who run an unlicensed daycare are wonderful caring for children. Our children were in a private daycare. Our neighbour looked after them when we were working—and my God, we couldn't have found a better place for our children. How convenient is that—right next door—when my wife and I were working. But the provisions in this bill are going to make it very difficult for those private, unlicensed places to operate. They're willing to get licenced. You've got to allow them to fit.

The issue here is—you always talk about “the children.” I'm one of 14 children, so I know what it's like to grow up in a home where there's a lot of activity. But if you really are caring about the children, you can't take this bill and pass it without some amendments and some discussion that could drastically reduce the number of child care opportunities for those children. I hope the government is not going to do what they've already done, on Bill 18 and Bill 15, and quash debate and not allow this to be heard throughout the province where those parents of those children are. Don't time-allocate this bill. Give us the opportunity to have full committee hearings throughout the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize the member from Parkdale-High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened, of course, with interest to my colleague from Toronto-Danforth. He gave, as always, a very detailed and very thorough discussion of this bill. One of the issues he touched on primarily was the lack of inspection. That's critical. No regulation and no bill will attack that unless there are enough inspectors to enforce it. I would like to hear from the minister on that.

I wanted to say a few words about the feminist aspect of this problem. We're next door to Quebec, where you can get \$7-a-day child care. We're next door to Manitoba, where you get \$17-a-day child care. This is a question of women's equality too. I remember back in the

day, Mr. Speaker, in the 1960s, that one of the key demands of feminists was universal, accessible, affordable child care. We're further from it now than we were back then. That's distressing because you will never have true women's equality without affordable, accessible, safe child care. Why? Because still now in 2014, child rearing falls to women in most families most of the time. That's still the fact. So for women to get ahead, for women to explore careers and professions, they have to have this option. We have to have this option. And we don't.

Surely this horrifying report from the Ombudsman is really a result of the lack of emphasis and interest in providing quality child care, period, in this province.

Quebec, by the way, their program—and they proved it—pays for itself. So you can't use money as an out here. They have proved that if you provide that child care for women and families, guess what? The taxes that the women pay because they're working actually pay for the child care that's provided. So there's no excuse for not doing the right thing. Please do it, Minister.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions or comments.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Ontario is taking steps to strengthen oversight of the province's unlicensed child care sector while increasing access to licensed child care options for families.

I don't think anyone would think that there's anything wrong with keeping our children safer. As a former educator who dealt with some children who were three and a half years old, I think it's very important that we do this. Who could object to the people who look after those children being licensed? I don't understand it. I don't understand why people would not want to be licensed and keep children safe.

This Child Care Modernization Act will shut down a child care provider when a child's safety is at risk. Is that not what we want? Is that not what we would like to happen when a child is in danger? We want that person to be gone from child care. The people who are going to harm children or abuse children—and it's very seldom; don't get me wrong—a big picture doesn't come up on a screen, and that's what the person looks like.

I think the province overlooking and overseeing all of this child care is very important. I cannot understand why anyone would object to it.

It also increases the number of children in licensed home-based child care from five to six. Who could object to that? I think that's great.

It requires private schools that care for more than five children under the age of four to be licensed. Who would object to that?

I think we need to pass this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the original debater, the member from Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My thanks to the minister, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the member from Parkdale–High Park and the member from Barrie for their comments.

I think the minister is quite correct in saying there are a lot of people who provide unlicensed care on a good-quality basis. Frankly, there are a whole bunch of people in this province who drive safely, and there are some people who don't, and that's why we have police on the road. There are a lot of people out there who are doing the best they can and doing a good job in their homes with children, but there are some who aren't. For those who aren't, there needs to be a system in place, people assigned to ensure that our children are looked after safely.

I think that part of the bill—and we may have debate about precisely how it all puts together. Maybe what you've got is the most practical; we will see, Minister. But the idea that you would actually ensure that children were protected, that the government of this province would look out for their best interests, look out for the best interest of parents, seems pretty logical to me.

The other questions that I raised in my speech, about ratios, about the level of investment needed—I hope that this debate will allow us to get into the substance of those issues at the same time. It isn't just going to be a bill; it's also going to be budgets, as you're well aware.

The speaker from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: I have to say, sir, that I now better understand the source of your approach to the world. With 14 kids, I would think everyone would just have a number, and you would do your best to herd them around. My mom grew up in a family of seven, and even there, I think you could get lost in the crowd. I think that is why this member in particular is able to stand out when there are a lot of people around.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate.

1730

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change—so 10 minutes each.

It's my pleasure to rise as the Minister of Children and Youth Services to speak in support of the Child Care Modernization Act.

If I could just go back to the last round of debates, I want to acknowledge the MPP from Toronto–Danforth because I thought his insights and comments were very thoughtful and measured. I know how much he knows about education because he actually came out to Durham region—it was before the election, right? I think it was in April. I remember being really sick.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** You were.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** But you tolerated me.

He came out all the way from Toronto–Danforth to Durham region, where an education debate was being held. There was representation from all parties. We had some really significant questions posed to us. He knows his stuff; I like to think I know my stuff. I think it was great. It was a good debate, and I think the participants enjoyed that. So I just want to say thank you to the member for doing that and coming out to our region and meeting with some of the teachers and other staff at the Durham school board.



In talking about the Child Care Modernization Act, I just want to reframe what this is all about. I think there's always this temptation, when we have legislation, to try to bring everything into a bill. This one brings in quite a bit.

Just to summarize, I suppose, what this bill is all about, it will first give the province authority to issue administrative penalties—up to \$100,000 per infraction by a child care giver—and increase maximum penalties for legal offences under the proposed act, changing that from the current \$2,000 to \$250,000. It's pretty significant.

It will also increase the number of children that a licensed home-based child care provider can care for. That increase will be from five to six.

It will clarify what programs and activities are exempt from licensing requirements, including care provided by relatives, babysitters, nannies, and camps that provide programs for school-aged children. I think that will be the kind of clarification that will be very welcome.

It will also require that all private schools that care for more than five children under the age of four be licensed.

Finally, there will be amendments to the Education Act to ensure that school boards offer before- and after-school programs for six- to 12-year-olds where there is sufficient demand. Also, programs could be delivered directly by boards, by third-party child care providers or by authorized recreation providers. So there is a fair amount of flexibility here in how that will be operationalized.

The legislation before us is intended to build on work that has been introduced before to improve oversight of child care, including the creation of a dedicated enforcement team, to investigate complaints against unlicensed providers, and the development of an online, searchable database of validated complaints.

I want to echo what the member from Toronto-Danforth said and what the Minister of Education said, which is that it is our belief that the vast majority of child care providers are very dedicated and very professional, and they put the interests of our children first and foremost. But we do want to make sure that we have strong legislation, of course, to make sure that our system is as safe and effective as it can be.

It is part of our investment to make sure that we continue to invest in people and give children the best possible start. Of course, if we're not investing in children's starts, we're not really helping them reach their full potential. As the minister responsible both for children and youth and for women's issues, I feel very, very strongly about this.

Where have we come from? Funding for child care in Ontario has increased from \$532.4 million to close to \$1 billion, a 90% increase since 2003. Also, the licensed child care capacity has grown by nearly 90,000 spaces since 2003, and that includes more than 22,000 new licensed, not-for-profit child care spaces since 2005.

Full-day kindergarten: We've talked about that; we've heard from other speakers about this. It's a very

significant investment, of course, in the early learning years, and we've seen results from that, and we know it is impacting the entire educational system. We know it's so important to getting good outcomes for our children.

We provided additional funding to support the transition to continue to modernize child care in Ontario. We had new funding of \$90 million in 2012-13, \$68 million in 2013-14 and \$84 million in 2014-15. Starting in 2014-15, our government is also investing an additional \$33.6 million over three years to further support ongoing operations and modernization of the child care act. That's where our money should be spent, quite frankly, when we look at how our budget is divided up. This does and should represent a significant part of Ontario's investment.

We want to introduce this act, move it forward and bring it to fruition to modernize child care and the early years system in Ontario, and we want to protect licensed child care spaces and the subsidies to improve the quality of care. We will provide wage increases of \$1 an hour in 2015 and \$1 an hour in 2016 for child care workers working outside the public school system. That's part of our commitment to look at the compensation programs for people who support children and other Ontarians, whether it's child care workers or PSWs, to make sure they're fairly compensated for the very, very important work they do, recognizing that we are putting, in this case, our children in their hands when we go to work or school—whatever. It is important that they be acknowledged professionally and that compensation be kept as competitive as possible.

Speaker, you'll know too that we increased the child benefit by \$100 in 2014—I think I actually announced that two days after the election; it was a real thrill for me to make that announcement—and that we are indexing benefits to the level of inflation in July 2015. I'm so happy that that got passed through the budget.

We are calling on all federal parties to adopt a national child care program in their upcoming 2015 election, whenever that is. We want to work with a willing federal partner to increase access to improve the quality of licensed child care as a core element.

Also in the budget, we have supports to help retain early childhood educators and close the wage gap, as I mentioned. The average wage, unfortunately, of an ECE is \$16.34 an hour. However, in school boards, they make over \$22 an hour. That's something we need to monitor as ECEs move through their salary grids.

I'm supportive of this moving forward. I sense a lot of support from the third party as well. I hope they will agree with this plan and, of course, tweak it as appropriate, as it goes to committee. I don't think—I stand to be corrected—the PCs put forward any kind of plan for child care. In fact, if I remember correctly, I think they wanted to get rid of full-day kindergarten, for example. If we hadn't been elected, we'd probably be seeing the elimination of that as we speak. That was disappointing, as well as filibustering at committees and blocking this kind of important legislation.

I do look forward to the co-operation of the third party as we move forward on this very important piece of legislation. I congratulate the Minister of Education for bringing this forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

I now recognize the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services for her very thoughtful and important contribution to the debate and to this legislation.

1740

I also just want to acknowledge my friend the Minister of Education, who I knew before I was in politics for the second time. I got to know her doing work in her community of Guelph and saw her rather remarkable leadership and understanding of community in a very complete way. I think this legislation reflects her broad world view and her sense of being able to bring people together.

I also want to acknowledge my friend from Toronto—Danforth because I agree with my colleagues on this side that that was a particularly thoughtful intervention. I think there is a great deal of alignment between both our parties on the importance and necessity of this.

As we go through the legislative process, I think we're always aware of how quickly numbers change in this House. While we and the third party share a much more common view of this than the official opposition, I think that it's very important that we put our kids first, especially when we get elected with a common view.

It's interesting to me because I'm always amazed at how disconnected we get from our past and how quickly we live only in the present and we seem to live without thought for the future. When I was reading this bill, I was thinking about the women in my family and in my life.

I went back to my grandmother. Mr. Speaker, my grandmother immigrated to Hamilton in 1908 and started raising a family. I was trying to imagine, if she actually lived in Canada when these kinds of programs were available—she had nine children. Two of them died of childhood diseases, which I would think would be incredibly difficult. She lived in a two-bedroom cold-water flat in Montreal. When she was a young woman, relatively speaking—in her forties—her husband had a stroke. He worked for the rail yards and could no longer work. She worked as a char, a cleaning lady, and tried to raise seven kids and support an ill husband. That was my family two generations ago. I grew up knowing my grandmother, this amazing woman. I didn't know her as a mom because she was an elderly woman by the time I was adopted.

This is a remarkable advancement. There are not that many places in the world that are actually capable and able and wealthy enough to introduce these kinds of solutions and these kinds of programs for the problems

that have been pointed out, that this government is not just responding to but leading beyond those issues. This is really quite a remarkable accomplishment.

I think about my mom. My mom is a remarkably brilliant woman. She became a mom in the 1950s and adopted me and my sister. My mom was a stay-at-home mom. My mom had a brilliant business mind. She had great acumen. She was mathematically very, very skilled. But she had to be a stay-at-home mom. That was just what you did, especially in a very traditional Ukrainian family. The girls raised the family before they thought about anything else.

We have a more enlightened view. It only took us 200 years to elect a woman Premier, but eventually us guys catch up.

I think about when my sister and I finally got old enough that my mom, had she had child care, had she had these kinds of programs, had we had early childhood education—she would've had a different life, as would my grandmother. Once we got out and my father left the corporate world and started his own business, my mom basically ran the business. She was the marketing genius. She balanced the books. She did the business plan. I remember how happy my mother was—not that she didn't like being a mom, but she actually got to a point in the latter half of her life when she got to be the kind of professional that she wanted to be.

Fortunately, by the time my sister became a parent—she had three children early in life, and her husband left her all alone, struggling, with just high school. My sister went back and became a nurse in her thirties, raising three children who were somewhat challenging. I don't think my sister would have been able to do that had she not been living in Canada and had the benefit of child care. My nephew now is a very, very good chef here in Toronto. The three children have done very well. But my sister had to face some pretty huge challenges financially. If it hadn't been for these kinds of social supports and these kinds of programs, she would not have those choices.

The enemy of good is perfect, and we will forever struggle to make child care more universal and more affordable. We will work forever to make early childhood education work better, to make sure that those workers who provide those services are better valued and better remunerated. But those are really huge things.

The numbers of children you raise—I was a foster parent and an adoptive parent. I had one child, my amazing son, Michael. Michael has fetal alcohol syndrome and has a whole bunch of health challenges that make his life more painfully difficult than any other human being I've ever known. To get through a day, if you know kids who have dealt with FAS, is a remarkable struggle to maintain your dignity and self-control. My son now owns his own business in Edmonton and has seven employees, and if you had talked to his social worker, you would never think that was possible.



I got to be a parent. The most important thing I've done in my entire life is be a dad. Now I'm a granddad, which isn't cool with my gay friends anymore, but I think it's kind of cool. I'm really proud of my son and my grandson. That's only possible because of the amazing social and cultural infrastructure that we have.

Everyone else has spoken articulately and so well to the bill, to the improvements that have been made, but I just think that sometimes you have to stand in this House and remember how far we have come. I think that sometimes women know that more than men, because women—let's be quite frank—have borne the responsibility for the entire care and nurturing of children. Before we had words for things like autism, those kinds of children became—the extended family supports. We lived in a generation—certainly my dad did, where he was expected to not be home, and to be the breadwinner, to bring that money home, and women have dealt with these kinds of things.

It's appropriate now that we finally have as many women on the front bench in this government as we have men. I think that we're seeing more and more progressive social policies, more concern about early childhood education, more concern about the income of PSWs and working women on the front lines. To be fair to the third party, which also has a very large contingent of women—I think that that's it. I think that many of us who are men are finally getting a little bit more sensitized to those responsibilities of parenthood and our responsibility to ensure that the wealth we generate actually is more equitably distributed, that the income-earning amount of one individual shouldn't determine the opportunities, the well-being and foundation on which a child is raised.

While we're not yet where I want to be, I think this bill takes us all closer to a society in which we're removing, systemically, barriers to children—all children, regardless of race, colour, gender, country of origin, sexual orientation, whatever. This is an incredibly important thing.

I joined this government in 2010 for a whole bunch of reasons, largely because I was quite a climate change activist and doing a lot of human rights work, and I was particularly impressed with some of the things that I had seen this government do. But I was particularly interested, as someone who has struggled—I was the first gay person I know to actually get the right to parent legally in Canada, which was quite something for me and seems to be a bit late in coming, but certainly is something that—so I really struggled, because I realized that if I screwed up, there wouldn't be a long line of people in my community behind me to be able to do that.

It seems to me that we're finally getting to that kind of place where we're actually getting to some equality. We're not doing that in the best of times. In my lifetime—I just had my 57th birthday on Saturday, and I think about that half-century that I've been alive. Through some of the best times, when we had the biggest

economic booms, we did not expand our social safety net. We did not look at our children and hold them up with greater opportunity.

What this really means, more than anything else, is greater independence for children. This means more and more children won't have to rely on a struggling single mother with seven kids and an ailing husband to try to make their lives work, which is almost mission impossible. This means that we have a better opportunity that those kids will grow up to be independent, to take care of themselves, to have higher self-esteem and to feel more equal in the society that we live in.

There are many of us here, under different political stripes, who would share that philosophy and those values. I think sometimes—and I've often said I feel this place is way too partisan—that we should have these more frank conversations and look, as aboriginal people do, to our grandkids' grandkids, seven generations down, and realize that if we can get as many positive changes in the next seven generations as we had in the last, we're really on the right track.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague the Minister of Education for her leadership, her thoughtfulness and her vision, and the consistency of her values that she brings to politics.

1750

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and belated happy birthday.

Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from Stormont-Dundas—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** South Glengarry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** —South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** You forgot the most important part.

Speaker, I just wanted to talk a little bit about this bill and some of the issues it's causing. Being a parent from the rural areas, we had our neighbours looking after our children. It's been quite an issue that we would make that not so available to us. I want to read a few words from a letter I received from somebody in my riding. It says:

"We live in Morrisburg, and there are no Toronto-style facilities in this area.

"Please fight for common sense when making suggestions for these changes. Know that the majority of parents rely heavily on the private sector home-based child care options. Many of us don't want the government dictating where and who can look after our children.

"Everything this Liberal disaster has touched has been a total epic failure. Why would we want them now dictating the fate of our children? Just look at the deaths of these children ... these caregivers were reported a number of times to the government, and yet they still failed!

"More regulations and government overreach is not the answer, nor will it ever be."

There has to be the ability for parents to do what they think is right, especially in the rural areas where the next daycare facility may be 30, 40, 50 kilometres away and maybe not a possibility for people who are not travelling to the centres in Cornwall. They're travelling to Berwick or some of the areas in the country, and finding child care options are not plentiful, and I think we're taking away these options.

The problems we're having are not with the small operators. Now, forcing them to register and become part of a bigger association is not doing anything but creating what the study shows: 140,000 daycare shortages. In a system that talks about 17,000 on waiting lists just last year, clearly there are not enough options, and I don't think we don't want to do anything that would restrict it further.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'd like to talk about a couple of things. I've been here for quite a while. Somebody talked about drivers, being good drivers and bad drivers, but the one thing about a good driver or a bad driver is they have to have a licence. Yet when we're taking care of the most important things in our lives—our kids and our grandkids—they don't have to have a licence to take care of them. It makes absolutely no sense to me.

I want to talk about the cost to families. Very similar to my colleague, I have three daughters. My oldest daughter is 40, with two kids. Chantel has three girls, all under seven. I can tell you exactly what it's saying here: Child care in Ontario can easily cost \$70 or \$80 a day, up to \$20,000 a year. Ontario families pay the highest child care costs in Canada. High daycare costs hit parents—and this is interesting to me, because this is exactly what has happened to my family—when they least expect it, when they have, on average, the least amount of money in their adult lives. They are just starting careers, paying off student debt, and they are making new mortgage payments.

When we take a look at the cost to our kids and our grandkids, we should make sure that we do have affordable daycare. It's at the time when they've got to pay for things for their children. It's at a time that they're putting them into sports and watching them grow, so it is an issue.

When you take a look at other things that are happening here—and this is our party—we recognize that it's time to overhaul the Day Nurseries Act. It was an act in 1946. I think it's a good time to probably upgrade it. It is outdated, and it needs to be replaced.

I think it's so important to make sure—and one of the members talked about it. I really believe this is an equality issue, because most of the time daycare—and it certainly is done that way in my family—falls back on to the mother, without a doubt.

My time ran out.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to respond to the comments from my colleagues: the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

The member from the official opposition actually did make an interesting comment, which is that when you look at rural and northern Ontario, given the geography, one does have to understand that often the only available child care is going to be home care. That's one of the reasons that, unlike the various suggestions that say everybody should be licensed, in fact, we have said, "You know what? The reality of the geography of Ontario, the reality of various economics"—and my problem was always my schedule. I had a very erratic schedule, which meant that I went to home care because my schedule, quite frankly, didn't fit with a licensed child care centre. It was irrelevant whether it was available. I had one schedule one day and something different the next. So we have to understand that people need a variety of options.

But what we also have to be sure about is that every option is safe. We do that in different ways. Where it's a child care centre, it's very structured. We have the option of licensed home child care. We want more people to go there. But even when it's unlicensed home child care, we need to make sure that it's safe. That's a large part of what we're doing with Bill 10: making sure that those home care options are safer because we recognize that families need the flexibility.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I appreciate the opportunity to share my comments because, in fact this government chooses to time allocate this bill as opposed to accepting a very reasonable suggestion from the member from Simcoe North in terms of putting this bill out to committee so they can hear from stakeholders and parents across this province—I want to take time today to read a comment from a letter that I received from Georgetown. This is from the perspective of a child care provider:

"I am a mother of three wonderful children, ages 5, 7 and 11 months. My two oldest are in school full time, so I take on two other children for child care." We need these extra dollars in our household.

"Even though my older children are in school for the entire day, if this bill passes, I still have to include them into my numbers, which hardly makes sense. I decided to only take in two children due to the fact that I wanted to give them the proper amount of attention with them being under two years old, but if I have to include my own 11-month-old child, then I would have three children under the age of two and have to say goodbye to one of the other children.

"I provide exceptional care to all of the children and have followed the Day Nurseries Act. The parents are happy with me and most of all, the children are happy here, settled and comfortable."

Again, Speaker, we need to be reasonable and give this bill proper attention. We feel very strongly, in the



opposition, that this proper attention would be best facilitated by going out throughout the province and hearing from stakeholders that have a stake in it. The idea of dictating and not being transparent and not being open to the realities of the provision of daycare in rural Ontario, northern Ontario and across the rest of the province—it has to be taken into consideration, and this government must do better in terms of listening to people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the Minister of Children and Youth Services for final comments.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Well, Speaker, I think this has been an interesting debate. I sense that we're all on the same page when it comes to providing the best daycare for our children in Ontario. Their safety and security and helping them reach their full potential is something we can all easily agree on.

As I made comment on in the debate earlier, this is not a new development. We've been modernizing child care over the years. We have been investing heavily in this sector. We want to continue to do so. By no means do we want to stifle debate, but I think there has been a tremendous amount of input from members in this House and from the sector, advice to the Minister of Education. We've been meeting with and hearing the thoughts—the issues and opportunities have been presented. We also

have taken very seriously the recommendations of the Ombudsman's report. There are many recommendations there. As the Minister of Education mentioned, the Ombudsman has acknowledged that this act we're talking about addresses a significant amount of those recommendations.

The members of the opposition want to travel, and I think there is a time and place where you do travel a bill. I don't think this is one of them, Speaker. We know what's going on with this bill. We know the concerns of stakeholders. The Minister of Education will continue to welcome feedback as this bill moves forward. I think we have to apply some judgment here about when it's really effective to travel a bill, and I don't think it is in this particular case. We need to move it forward and make the edits, the modifications, as appropriate, respond to the Ombudsman, and let's get on with it.

Thank you, Speaker, and thanks to everyone who made comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank all members for a respectful debate today.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** It is now 6 o'clock and the Legislature will be adjourned until tomorrow at 9 o'clock.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

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<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
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Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
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Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones



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**Legislative Assembly  
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First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature



**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 29 October 2014**

**Mercredi 29 octobre 2014**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 29 October 2014

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 29 octobre 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PUBLIC SECTOR AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION ET LA TRANSPARENCE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Matthews moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / *Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. Matthews.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker. Today I'm happy to begin second reading debate on the proposed Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Etobicoke Centre.

I'm very proud of Bill 8. The bill shows that our commitment about being accountable to the people of Ontario is serious. The proposed Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014, would, if passed, build on the Premier's commitment to lead the most open and transparent government in the country. It would tackle tough issues and enhance oversight across the public sector, and it would strengthen political accountability and open up the business of government. The proposed bill is far-reaching and a signature piece of legislation that would, if passed, set a high standard for oversight and accountability in Ontario.

From giving government the power to directly control executive pay in the broader public sector, to enhancing oversight in the health sector to improve the care of

patients and ensure the safety of those who rely on air ambulance service, to further strengthening our record-keeping obligations and legislating the public disclosure of expenses of our elected members, we are serious about restoring trust in government.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, I know where you could start.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew, no drive-by heckling

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The proposed legislation, if passed, would build on a number of measures our government has already taken. For example, in 2009 we introduced the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, which gives the Integrity Commissioner authority to review expense claims of Ontario's 17 largest classified agencies and the four hydro organizations. The Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, introduced in 2010, sets out accountability measures for designated broader public sector organizations.

Ontario has a strong accountability framework in place for its elected members and public servants; and with Bill 8 we propose to set the bar even higher. The 2014 Ontario budget committed to controlling compensation for executives in the broader public sector, and with this proposed legislation we're making good on this promise. The people of Ontario have a right to know how their dollars are being spent, and that includes executive compensation.

This legislation would, if passed, authorize the government to control the compensation of executives in the BPS, the broader public service, and take action to ensure compliance. The provisions in this bill would give government the right to access all compensation-related information so we can set those compensation frameworks, including sector-specific hard caps.

The government would not just be looking at salaries. These proposed compensation frameworks could address a broad range of compensation elements, including pay-at-risk and benefits. If the proposed legislation is passed, the government would take a strong and fair approach to developing compensation frameworks that would provide consistency and clarity.

We recognize the unique nature and challenges of each sector. That's why we would be consulting with each sector as the proposed frameworks are being developed. We want to ensure that sector-specific considerations are built into those frameworks. This would help us apply a consistent method and implement reasonable levels of compensation across the BPS.



Speaker, we value the very important work of our broader public sector employees. We want to ensure that we're able to attract good talent and, at the same time, manage public dollars responsibly. The proposed bill, if passed, would include enforcement and compliance measures. Heads of organizations would be required to submit attestations confirming that they are in compliance with the compensation frameworks; and our government would also have the ability to audit any of these organizations to ensure that they are in compliance with these frameworks. Furthermore, employers could be required to repay any amount that exceeds what is authorized under the act, while minimizing the impact on its services to the public.

Offence provisions have been created that would address wilful non-compliance with attestation or audit requirements, with fines on conviction of up to \$5,000. The proposed legislation would, if passed, apply to hospitals or community care access corporations, school boards, universities, colleges of applied arts and technology, and hydro entities. The government plans to look at options to expand the government's authority over broader public sector executive compensation that would be enabled by this proposed legislation, if passed. Other authorities, boards, commissions, corporations or organizations could be included through future regulation.

This proposed legislation demonstrates the government's commitment to the long-term reform of senior executive compensation in the broader public sector. However, this is not by any means the first action that the government has proposed on restraining BPS compensation. We know that every dollar counts, and all of our partners have a role to play. Our government has already led by example, by extending the MPP wage freeze that began in 2008. It will remain in effect until we balance the books. Sad to say, Speaker, the opposition recently voted against this freeze.

Since the 2010 Ontario budget, the government has implemented multiple initiatives to manage compensation in the broader public sector. We've brought in the Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act, 2010, which froze compensation for employees in the OPS and BPS who do not bargain collectively, including political and legislative staff, for two years. Changes made in 2012 to the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010, froze all aspects of compensation plans for designated executives at hospitals, colleges, school boards, universities and hydro entities.

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In addition, base salaries cannot be increased, and the overall performance pay envelopes for all non-bargaining employees at those designated employers are frozen. Our existing freeze on salaries for executives in the BPS would remain in effect until we establish the compensation framework, if Bill 8 is passed.

Speaker, I'm proud of this government's track record and of this proposed legislation, both of which demonstrate the government's long-term view of reforming executive compensation in the broader public sector. It's

my pleasure to now take this opportunity to outline the components of the bill that would, if passed, strengthen oversight of government and bolster the relationship we, as a government, have with the people we serve.

In the Ontario government, we deliver essential services to over 13 million Ontarians each and every day: services like health care, education and child protection. I'm proud of the work we do and the partnerships we have in place to deliver these services. Our government is continuously looking to improve our services and set a high bar for the people we serve. As we do this, it's important to have a variety of expert perspectives and oversights. That's why we're proposing to improve support for patients in Ontario, in our continuing effort to promote patient-centred care.

The proposed legislation would, if passed, amend the Excellent Care for All Act and establish a patient ombudsman to receive and attempt to resolve complaints from people who have received services from health care sector organizations in Ontario such as hospitals, long-term-care homes and community care access centres. The patient ombudsman would work directly with complainants and health sector organizations to facilitate the resolution of complaints. He or she would also conduct investigations and make recommendations to health care sector organizations, in response to complaints and on his or her own initiative. To increase transparency and drive improvement, the patient ombudsman would issue public reports on his or her activities and recommendations, without, of course, disclosing personal health information.

Our government believes that a sector-specific approach is the right approach when it comes to oversight in health care. The patient ombudsman would focus specifically on health care issues and build on expertise, structures and processes already in place in organizations across the health care system, many of which are specialized and knowledge-intensive. The patient ombudsman's powers and responsibilities are closely based on those of the provincial Ombudsman, but would be tailored to the health care system context. These proposed changes would build on our efforts to improve the patient experience and quality of health care in Ontario, and would provide additional support to Ontario's patients.

Speaker, the Ombudsman of Ontario plays a key role in promoting high standards in helping to address systemic issues in the delivery of services. The Ombudsman is an important voice for the people of Ontario. We recognize the invaluable work the Ombudsman has done to promote transparency and accountability across the public sector, and we're committed to strengthening the Ombudsman's role. That's why I'm pleased that our proposed bill, if passed, would expand the role of the Ontario Ombudsman.

Proposed changes to the Ombudsman Act would provide the Ontario Ombudsman with authority to investigate municipalities, school boards and publicly funded universities. Speaker, our proposed bill would extend the Ontario Ombudsman's role to include the 444 municipal-

ities across Ontario. The provincial Ombudsman could also, upon complaint, undertake a closed-municipal-meeting investigation. If passed, the proposed act would allow the Ombudsman to investigate any decision, recommendation or act done or omitted in the course of the administration of a municipality and most of its local boards.

Under our proposed legislation, municipalities would still have the authority to appoint their own ombudsman; the city of Toronto has one—as well as their own closed-municipal-meeting investigator. Our proposed approach would enable the Ontario Ombudsman to step in for complaints only after local ombudsman and closed-meeting processes have been completed. At the same time, the Ontario Ombudsman, as he now can for provincial matters, would be able to investigate municipal matters on his or her own initiative.

Our government respects municipalities and the work of municipal councillors. This is about making sure every Ontarian in every municipality has access to an ombudsman; this is about providing the people of Ontario with access to stronger accountability processes.

This proposed legislation would also expand the role of the Ombudsman to include the 20 publicly funded universities that serve Ontario's postgraduate students. The proposed amendments to the Ombudsman Act would, if passed, provide the Ombudsman with authority to investigate complaints about our publicly funded universities. This would provide additional oversight and increase accountability within our universities. These institutions play a critical role in our province and for our economy, and we value their contributions immensely. If our bill is passed, the Ombudsman would be required to respect the principles of academic freedom when conducting investigations. These principles are vital to the mission of universities to educate and enrich the minds of young people.

I know universities already have extensive processes in place to address complaints. Under our proposed legislation, publicly funded universities would still have the authority to appoint their own ombudsman. The proposed approach would enable the Ontario Ombudsman to investigate only after all university processes have been exhausted, and the university governing body or senate internal review or appeal processes have been completed. Our proposed changes would help build on these processes, and help to foster public trust and confidence in government.

Our proposed bill would, if passed, enable the Ombudsman to oversee the 82 school boards that serve Ontario students. The proposed act would give the Ombudsman the authority to investigate complaints about school boards. This would give parents and members of the public the option to direct their complaints to the Ombudsman, if they're not satisfied with a school board decision.

Our proposed changes to the Ombudsman Act are meant to enhance local oversight by providing the public with an impartial body to investigate complaints and rec-

ommended improvements to local processes. The Ombudsman would have authority to investigate only after school board internal review or appeal processes have been completed.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Ombudsman is an important voice for the people of Ontario. I'm pleased that the bill before this assembly would provide the Ontario Ombudsman with a greater role.

When it comes to oversight, there is perhaps no greater issue than those relating to Ontario's young people, particularly children involved in the child protection system—and I see the Minister of Children and Youth Services is here for this part of the speech.

Our children in the child protection system are among Ontario's most vulnerable citizens, and that's why we're proposing to expand the mandate of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. The proposed amendments would give the advocate investigative powers for matters related to the services provided by the children's aid societies, and certain residential licensees where a children's aid society is the placing agency.

The amendments would, if passed, require the advocate's office to establish expertise both in conducting investigations and in child protection issues. The advocate already has significant experience engaging with children and youth, and has existing working relationships with the child welfare sector. As a result, the advocate is well-positioned to provide this additional oversight, putting the best interests of children and youth first.

Finally, our government is moving forward on our continued commitment to restore public confidence in Ontario's air ambulance service. Amendments to the Ambulance Act were part of the former Bill 11; these amendments have now been incorporated into this bill.

This bill, if passed, would protect whistle-blowers while allowing the government to take control in extraordinary circumstances. These changes would allow the government to appoint special investigators when it is in the public interest to do so. It would allow the government to appoint members to Ornge's board of directors; amend provisions of the performance agreement with the service provider, at any time, by regulation; and provide whistle-blowing protection for staff who disclose information to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The legislation would, if passed, build on steps already taken to improve accountability, patient safety, response times and air safety. We're committed to providing responsible government services, and improving protection for families and consumers.

**0920**

Speaker, I'm proud of the bill I'm starting second reading debate on today. It provides a robust plan on long-term senior executive compensation restraint in the broader public sector. It sends a clear signal that citizens have recourse for complaints in municipalities, school boards and universities, and it addresses the real need to support patients and protect vulnerable children.

Now, my esteemed colleague, the member from Etobicoke Centre, will outline other proposed measures of Bill



8. We hope that our colleagues in the Legislature will work with us to pass these new measures and make government more accountable for all Ontarians.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you very much, Minister. I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to help move forward with second reading of the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014. Je suis ravi de pouvoir contribuer à l'adoption de la deuxième lecture de la Loi de 2014 sur la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés.

Over the past few years, as all of us have, I've knocked on many doors and spoken to many constituents; and I heard from them about a range of issues and concerns. One of the issues that I heard from them frequently was the need for government to be accountable, the need for the government to be transparent, that we shepherd our tax dollars wisely and that we ensure long-term financial sustainability as a government, so that we can continue to provide the services that Ontarians have come to rely on, that the constituents of my riding of Etobicoke Centre have come to rely on. That is why I'm so honoured to be parliamentary assistant to Deb Matthews, to work with her on just these issues that my constituents raised. And that is why I am so honoured to be here today to speak to this bill.

This is a signature bill, Mr. Speaker, for this government. It reflects our commitment to set the highest standards for accountability and transparency, and it demonstrates that this government has made it a priority to be more open and more accountable to the people that we serve. All of these things are priorities that we take seriously.

Il s'agit d'un projet de loi prioritaire pour notre gouvernement. Il reflète notre engagement à établir des normes très élevées en matière de responsabilisation et de transparence, et il démontre que notre gouvernement a donné la priorité à une plus grande ouverture et responsabilité envers la population qu'il sert.

Minister Matthews described some of the cornerstones of the proposed bill, including measures to rein in broader public sector senior executive compensation. It is my pleasure to outline the components of the bill that would, if passed, strengthen political accountability; modernize the reporting of lobbyist activity; further strengthen our record-keeping obligations; and provide greater transparency in the classified agency and broader public sectors.

Je vais maintenant vous présenter les grandes lignes du projet de loi. S'il est adopté, il augmentera la responsabilisation politique, modernisera les rapports sur les activités des lobbyistes, renforcera nos obligations de tenue de dossiers et assurera une plus grande transparence dans le secteur des organismes classifiés et dans le secteur parapublic.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that openness begins with us. It begins with the members in this House, with our elected representatives. We who are elected into office need to lead by example. That is why our government is proposing new measures that, if passed, would

set a high standard and make Ontario a leader by legislating expense reporting for elected representatives.

Notre gouvernement estime que la transparence commence au niveau des représentants élus. Nous qui sommes élus à nos fonctions devons montrer l'exemple. C'est pourquoi notre gouvernement propose de nouvelles mesures qui, si elles sont adoptées, établissent des normes élevées et feront de l'Ontario un chef de file en obligeant les représentants élus à rendre compte de leurs dépenses.

The proposed bill, if passed, would make it mandatory for cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their staff to post their expense information online. Currently, this expense reporting is done on a voluntary basis.

Under the proposed bill, information on expenses claimed by cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their staff would continue to be subject to a review process by the Integrity Commissioner, an officer of this assembly.

The Premier, our cabinet and staff have been complying with that spirit of transparency voluntarily since April 1, 2010, and by making online reporting a legislative requirement, we would ensure that the opposition would follow our lead.

Mr. Speaker, our government's proposals to report expense information online do not just stop with cabinet members, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders, and their staff. Under the proposed bill, online reporting of expense information would also extend to each and every one of the MPPs in this Legislature. The bill, if passed, would require the Speaker to post online information on MPP expenses concerning out-of-riding travel, related hotel expenses, meals and hospitality expenses.

Our government believes that elected representatives need to lead by example. I think we can all agree that the people of Ontario deserve clear and easy access to the expenses of their elected representatives. Taking action to have greater accountability and transparency in expense reporting for elected representatives is one of the key anchors of this proposed legislation. Our government believes that the people of Ontario have the right to know how their elected representatives are spending tax dollars to do the work that we are mandated to do.

Mr. Speaker, lobbying is also an essential part of a healthy democracy.

Notre gouvernement comprend le rôle important que joue la transparence pour laisser savoir à la population ontarienne qui communique avec son gouvernement et dans quel objectif. Nous comprenons également qu'en renforçant la responsabilisation, nous améliorerons l'information qui est communiquée au public. C'est pourquoi nous proposons de moderniser la Loi sur l'enregistrement des lobbyistes.

Our government understands the important role transparency plays in letting the people of Ontario know who is communicating with their government and for what purpose. We also understand that strengthening accountability would help to improve the information that is provided to the public. That's why we're proposing to

modernize Ontario's Lobbyists Registration Act. In our province, Mr. Speaker, the Integrity Commissioner also plays an important role as the registrar appointed under the Lobbyists Registration Act, and we value her contribution. The proposed amendments are a response to the registrar's recommendations.

If passed, the proposed amendments would strengthen oversight and enforcement powers for the registrar and enhance transparency of the lobbyists registry. The proposed bill would give the registrar investigative powers and the ability to prohibit individuals from lobbying for up to two years, if they are found to have violated the act. It would also establish new rules for lobbyists. This includes prohibiting lobbyists from lobbying and providing paid advice on the same subject matter at the same time. It also includes establishing a single set of rules that apply to in-house lobbyists at both for-profit and non-profit organizations. Enforcement provisions would include stiffer fines: a fine of up to \$25,000 for a first-time offence and a fine of up to \$100,000 for subsequent offences. These amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act are part of our continued effort to make government more open and accountable for the people of Ontario.

Now, another key component of our blueprint for enhanced accountability and transparency is our proposed reforms on record-keeping. Our government takes record-keeping obligations very seriously. The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has credited our government for implementing important record-keeping reforms and staff training, and to date we've acted on all the non-legislative recommendations. With this proposed bill, we're going further; we're taking further action.

Notre plan d'amélioration de la responsabilisation et de la transparence comprend un autre aspect majeur : un projet de réforme des obligations en matière de tenue de dossiers. Notre gouvernement octroie une importance capitale à ses obligations en matière de tenue de dossiers. Le Bureau du commissaire à l'information et à la protection de la vie privée de l'Ontario a remercié notre gouvernement d'avoir mis en oeuvre des réformes en matière de tenue de dossiers et de la formation du personnel. À ce jour, nous avons donné suite à toutes les recommandations de nature non législative. Avec notre projet de loi, nous franchissons une autre étape.

This legislation would, if passed, take the next step by acting on three of the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommended legislative amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, known as FIPPA, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, known as MFIPPA. The proposed bill would require all institutions subject to FIPPA and MFIPPA to ensure that measures are in place to preserve records, Mr. Speaker, to prohibit the wilful destruction of records with the intent to deny someone the right to access records, and to introduce a fine of up to \$5,000 for the wilful destruction of records.

Our government consulted with the acting commissioner and his office about the recommendations to assist us in the development of this legislation. We wanted to

ensure that we're properly addressing the three specific legislative recommendations. Members may ask, why are we not proposing an amendment with respect to the recommendation to legislatively require the duty to document all key decisions within government?

Currently, there is no legislative duty to document in either freedom of information or record-keeping legislation in any other jurisdiction in Canada. That said, our government is attentive to this and is going to be proactive, and it has been proactive. We've had discussions with the acting commissioner about this and are discussing this further with other Canadian jurisdictions.

**0930**

Regardless of how we proceed on this front, our recent and ongoing training on records management for staff continues to emphasize the need to manage and create public records in order to document key government decisions, activities and operations. The other thing I should mention is that all major policy decisions are always documented through meeting minutes, briefing notes, Management Board and Treasury Board notes as well as cabinet minutes.

Our government has listened to the recommendations of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding the establishment of the offence provision related to the wilful destruction of public records. The proposed offence provision is in line with similar offence provisions in seven other Canadian jurisdictions, including the federal government. If our legislation passes, the establishment of the proposed offence provision would send a clear signal about how organizations and individuals subject to this legislation must manage their records, and the consequences that would flow from the improper destruction of records with the intent to avoid access to information requests.

Mr. Speaker, we are also proposing a longer limitation period in connection with a new records destruction offence provision in FIPPA and MFIPPA. Currently, the limitation period for many provincial offences is actually six months. This means that a prosecution cannot take place six months after an offence has been committed. We recognize that the wilful destruction of records may not be discovered within that time frame; accordingly, we've proposed extending the time period for the prosecution of this new offence to two years after the commission of the offence is first discovered. Under this legislation, if passed, a prosecution for this offence would require the consent of the Attorney General.

Le projet de loi 8 mise sur les efforts en vue d'instaurer une plus grande transparence dans le secteur parapublic et de rendre le gouvernement plus accessible pour toute la population ontarienne. Des changements proposés à la Loi de 2010 sur la responsabilisation du secteur parapublic exigeront, s'ils sont adoptés, que les organismes désignés affichent leurs plans d'activités et autres documents financiers ou officiels précisés.

Another component of Bill 8 would also be to build on the efforts to bring greater transparency to the broader public sector, and help us make government more acces-



sible for all Ontarians. Proposed changes to the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act would, if passed, require designated organizations to post their business plans and other specified business or financial documents. The legislation would give Management Board of Cabinet the authority to issue a directive outlining the specific requirements. Many broader public sector organizations already post their business plans. These proposed changes would make this practice into a mandatory requirement for all and would apply to organizations already designated under the act, including hospitals, school boards, publicly assisted universities and colleges of applied arts and technology, children's aid societies, community care access centres, and organizations that received \$10 million or more in public funding from the government in the previous fiscal year.

Le commissaire à l'intégrité a également un rôle à jouer dans la promotion de la transparence et dans la responsabilisation lorsqu'il examine les dépenses. Le commissaire à l'intégrité examine les dépenses des ministres, des adjoints parlementaires, des chefs de l'opposition et de leur personnel en vertu du pouvoir que lui confère la Loi de 2002 sur l'examen des dépenses des ministres et des chefs d'un parti de l'opposition et l'obligation de rendre compte. Si ce projet de loi est adopté, nos modifications proposées à cette loi exigeront que ces dépenses soient affichées en ligne. L'affichage ne serait plus une pratique exemplaire volontaire; ce serait une exigence législative obligatoire.

The Integrity Commissioner plays a role in promoting transparency and accountability when it comes to reviewing expenses. The Integrity Commissioner reviews the expenses of cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their staff under the authority of the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act. If passed, our proposed amendments to that act would require that these expenses be posted online. This would no longer be a voluntary best practice; it would be a mandatory legislative requirement.

Since the Public Sector Expenses Review Act came into force in 2009, the Integrity Commissioner has also been reviewing the expenses of 17 classified agencies and four hydro organizations—the public entities currently prescribed in regulation. This review process ensures that these organizations are complying with the travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive. This is demonstrating a responsible use of public funds.

Our proposed legislation would, if passed, provide the Integrity Commissioner with the ability to select which organizations she would review. The government intends to include all 196 classified agencies through a regulatory change. The Integrity Commissioner would then have the ability to select, in a given time period, which of these organizations would be required to submit expenses for review. These proposed changes are based on recommendations from the Integrity Commissioner. I know these changes would, if passed, help to promote transparency and accountability across all classified agencies and hydro organizations.

La Loi de 2014 sur la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés nous aidera à relever la barre au sein du gouvernement et dans le secteur parapublic. Cette loi, complète, établira des normes élevées pour nous tous et contribuera à instaurer le gouvernement transparent, ouvert et accessible que mérite la population de l'Ontario, qui travaille dur.

Mr. Speaker, when I opened I shared with you how my constituents look for government to be transparent and accountable. I told you that I'm honoured to be working with Minister Deb Matthews on this—and I am—and I told you that I'm honoured to stand here to speak to this bill, and I am. I am honoured because the proposed Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act will help us raise the bar in government and in the broader public sector. This legislation will set a high standard for us all and it will help build a transparent, open and accessible government the hard-working people have asked for, and the transparent, open and accessible government the hard-working people of Ontario deserve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Two-minute responses?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's with interest that we hear this bill and hear the discussion on the other side. The talk about leading by example—I think this government has a horrible example to the public of records being destroyed. We talk about that six months may not be long enough. Of course, it took us six months just to get through committee to force the Speaker to make a decision requiring them to release what records they did have, only to find that most of them had been deleted. The commissioner is reporting that no record of decisions has been made. Everything that had led to some of these decisions was deleted, which, in their comments, did not make sense—that decisions could be made with no record of any of the correspondence that went along with that.

In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, people were appalled by the record of this government. I see this legislation, and they're holding it up like they are so much mightier than thou, but legislation like this is required because of the actions of a government like this. Whether it be Ornge, whether it be the gas plants—and who knows what else is there because it has been so hard to get information.

I sat in the committee where it took months of filibustering by this government so we couldn't get reports that should have been released to this House. It really is something that we see. Unfortunately with government sometimes we need legislation like this because we can see from experience that this is the type of actions that go on.

We're certainly supporting this bill and we look forward to its passage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** We certainly support accountability. It's something that is essential in a democracy. It creates a climate for people to have trust in their govern-

ment, so we absolutely support accountability. But by bringing up the accountability transparency act it also raises questions about what the government has done in the past and what they're doing to systemically rectify issues that this government has created with their own doing.

To be clear, if you look at the Ornge scandal, the Ornge scandal was something absolutely preventable. There were steps taken by the opposition, by the NDP and by the Conservatives, steps that we took as opposition to ensure that this government would be transparent and would be held accountable. But, systemically, answers were not provided to questions asked years and years ago, when red flags were raised. A number of red flags were raised to the ministry. There were audits conducted, audits that brought forward issues that the government simply ignored.

0940

Those are systemic issues. Those aren't just one-offs. That is a system that's clearly broken. That shows there's a serious problem: This government does not take accountability and transparency seriously. Those are some of the systemic changes that we need so that if the opposition parties raise an issue, the government has to respond and it has to take action. If there are clear red flags raised, there has to be some measure of accountability that ministry officials can't simply ignore when clear signs are there, are apparent, that there are problems.

While we certainly support transparency and accountability, we would like to see something more in-depth, something more systemic, to address these serious flaws where opposition members who are doing our duty as the hawks of legislation, as the oversight mechanism of this Legislature—to ensure that our role is respected and our role is recognized in ensuring that our government is accountable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm very pleased to respond to my colleagues, the Deputy Premier and the member for Etobicoke Centre, who both spoke quite eloquently on this issue today on this very important accountability and transparency act. As we've heard, the Premier has made it a top priority for openness and transparency.

I want to comment specifically on compensation for executives in the public sector. A week ago, I had a visit from two representatives from Unifor, who came to my constituency office. They are in the middle of negotiating right now for their hospital workers in Kitchener Centre.

These are very hard-working individuals who wonder why it is that there are some hospital executives who, in some cases, are earning 10 times the amount of money as front-line workers. I ask that question too. If Bill 8 is passed, it's going to take a very principled approach to compensation, because that's what we need.

We are also committed to continuing the MPP wage freeze until we deliver a balanced budget. Sadly, the opposition voted against this.

We're also committed to letting the public know how MPPs are spending their tax dollars. This is why we want to see all expenses posted online. I'll tell you that in my previous life as a journalist, I tried to produce many stories on reporting how it is that elected representatives are spending tax dollars. It wasn't always easy trying to get your hands on this information. This bill is going to go a long way in helping not only the media but the public know how tax dollars are being spent.

Bill 8 is going to take aim at providing more oversight and accountability—this is what we're committed to—and it's going to ensure that tax dollars are going to be spent wisely in the province of Ontario. That is our goal, and we hope that we will have support from the opposition.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm pleased to stand and discuss the relevancy and the merits of Bill 8.

One of the things that has been pointed out—and our critic for this particular file has done an excellent job in updating us and identifying all the different acts that are going to be involved or affected as a result of this. There are about 16 different acts, including the Legislative Assembly Act, the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Ombudsman Act and the Lobbyists Registration Act, just to name a few. As I said, there are about 16.

I'm all for transparency and accountability; I see no problem with that. We will be supporting this, but again with amendments, because, first of all, I think one of the concerns that I have is that the Treasury Board president hasn't done any costing on this for savings or expenses. Secondly, we feel that the bureaucracy will in fact grow as a result of that, and that bureaucracy then is more taxpayer dollars being spent to pay for or cover an expanding area.

Of course, one of the things that I'd like to point out too is that ethics can't be legislated. They truly cannot be legislated. Of course, the government has put accountability measures in place before, and we know how that has turned out. We talk about the eHealth scandal; we talk about gas plant scandals; we talk about air Ornge scandals. They talk about it, but then there's no follow-through. In sports, we all know that the follow-through is important.

One last thing I'd like to talk about is the lobbyist act. When I read that I thought, "Huh, isn't that interesting? The lobbyist act—they want to put some restrictions on them." When I saw that, I thought, "Why don't you put restrictions on third party and/or special interest groups when it comes to the writ?" Of course, I'll talk further about that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Etobicoke Centre has two minutes.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's an honour to respond to the points being made by the members opposite.

I'd like to say, first of all, and repeat what I said earlier, that this is broad-ranging legislation. It's designed to increase accountability and transparency throughout



government, and that's why it amends so many acts. I hope we can count on the support of the members opposite.

This is really an opportunity to address the needs of Ontarians, to address what Ontarians asked us for and what they deserve, which is an open and transparent government. One of the things we heard from constituents was that they want to know that we're shepherding our tax dollars wisely. One of the best ways to do that is to start with us, to start with our elected representatives, to lead by example and to make sure that we're disclosing how those tax dollars are being spent.

This bill is going to also rein in broader public sector senior executive compensation. Again, this is about making sure that taxpayer dollars are being shepherded wisely.

This is going to strengthen political accountability. It's going to modernize the reporting of lobbying activity; further strengthen our record-keeping obligations, to address some of the issues that the members opposite have raised; and provide great transparency in classified agencies and the broader public sectors.

One of the other things that I think is important to note about this bill—I come from a business background where some organizations publish their business plans, publish their future plans and their strategies. I've seen the benefits that this can bring to organizations. I think that by asking government to do the same, we are going to benefit not only the operation of government but benefit all taxpayers—again, in the spirit of making sure that we're accountable and transparent, but also to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being managed wisely.

I think this is a strong bill; it's a signature bill; it's a wide-ranging bill. It increases accountability and transparency. It makes sure that we're shepherding our tax dollars wisely. I would invite the members opposite to support the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the opportunity to engage in Bill 8 debate today as the critic for the Treasury Board. Most of this bill, we agree with, on the opposition side, so I think that with some amendments, this bill would receive support from the official opposition.

This bill had been debated previously, in the last Parliament, and of course that's very fresh in all of our minds. It was just less than a year ago when my former colleague Doug Holyday took to this assembly floor and talked about his thoughts on this piece of legislation. At the time, Doug said, "The omnibus piece of legislation is a far-reaching proposal that, if enacted in full, would expand considerably the scope and impact of controlled supervision of spending by public sector agencies and elected officials." This is something that our party has often agreed with. In fact, I had put forward a very comprehensive truth-in-government piece of legislation in previous Parliaments to talk about greater government accountability and transparency.

That said, every piece of legislation, when it hits the floor of assembly, isn't perfect, and I do intend to share

some of my concerns about this piece of legislation. But before I do that, I did want to say thank you for the very comprehensive briefing that I received from ministerial staff as well as the President of the Treasury Board's ministerial staff. They took me through the compendium. At the time, I had a number of questions, some of which were answered satisfactorily, and others that I think should have further debate not only in this assembly but, certainly, as we engage through the committee process.

I think it's really important that those stakeholders that are affected, including the Ombudsman, the Integrity Commissioner, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, and the broader public sector should be engaged and brought to this process. I do also point out that several municipalities may actually want to provide deputations themselves, given the expanded role and power of the Ombudsman.

I think that a starting point for us would be engaging in debate here, talking to stakeholders, but I believe a full hearing at committee would be really beneficial as we move forward.

**0950**

I think it is no secret that this piece of legislation is put before us on the assembly floor, not only now here as Bill 8 but previously as Bill 179 in the last Parliament, because of two ongoing OPP investigations, one into the deleted documents and emails as they pertain to the gas plant scandal from the 2011 election, as well as the air ambulance scandal at Ornge which effectively has rocked this assembly.

There will be a public accounts report that will come out this week regarding that travesty. I can say, as Vice-Chair of the public accounts committee, that that will be made available in both official languages later this week. It will be tabled by my seatmate Ernie Hardeman, who is the Chair. It will talk about some of the recommendations that our non-partisan Standing Committee on Public Accounts has to deal with the Ornge air ambulance scandal.

For the benefit of those members who have just arrived at this assembly in the last four to five months, I think it's important they understand that the reason or *raison d'être* behind this legislation is two OPP investigations into the government.

I had heard it before, and it's important to say one more time—I believe it was my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex who said you can't legislate ethics. That's really important, because when you look at why some of this legislation is put before us, it is because of some of the actions of government and some of the actions of government when they were ignoring existing legislation.

Again, I put to the members opposite, and I think this is going to be a challenge for them to come to an answer to on the floor of this assembly: How, if there were previous laws in place, could they have been so brutally ignored? That's going to be one. The example that comes to my mind immediately is public records and archiving. As the former energy critic who sat on the justice committee during the entire probe and looked into the

Auditor General's report, my big concern at the time was that there was potentially a criminal breach of trust, given that there was legislation on the books, enacted by the government, yet even Premier Mr. Dalton McGuinty, who had talked about all of this wonderful new era of accountability and who brought in public records archiving legislation—his own staff had ignored it.

That, to me, is very concerning. So the onus now becomes on the government to say to us, "We will follow our own legislation," because previously they hadn't. I don't think that's unreasonable, for the opposition and the public to ask that question and to hold the government accountable, and we are quite skeptical.

There is an onus on the government to say, "Yes, when we put this omnibus legislation forward," as I believe the parliamentary secretary said—he called it "wide-ranging." If they are going to put this on the agenda, they're going to have to implement it and follow it. But, as I say, you cannot legislate ethics. It is going to be a directive from the top here by the Premier who will make sure that this is a government that is accountable, and that hasn't happened previously.

I can cite numerous examples, Speaker. You have been in this assembly for a little bit—almost as long as myself, and I can certainly say to you this: We have experienced scandals at the OLG, at eHealth, at Ornge, the gas plants and Cancer Care Ontario. We've seen legislation respond to those scandals over the past decade, since this government has taken office. Again, we continue to see more spending scandals and more mismanagement arise. I don't think it is unreasonable for us in the opposition to raise those concerns. In fact, I think that's what the public expects us to do.

I wanted to point out a couple of the challenges and where I wasn't satisfied with some of the responses I received from the bureaucrats and from the minister's office—not to say that the briefing I received wasn't beneficial; it certainly was. They answered a lot of my questions. It was a wide-ranging and fulsome discussion. But in the summer, when I was being briefed on this bill, there were areas that I was concerned with.

The first is the overlap and duplication. My concern is that if we're going to continually expand people's powers, I would be disappointed if there was an auditor's report being done at the same time as an Ombudsman report. I think you're looking at two very thorough legislative bodies that are independent to this assembly but will probably be looking at the same thing. That needs to be refined, and I think the minister has an opportunity to hone in on that and ensure that there are no duplicate processes happening into, for example, the same agency, into the same board or commission or even into a municipality or another public sector entity.

When that occurs, if there is duplication and overlap, two things could happen: There could be conflicting reports, or we could be expending more resources on one agency than need be while we're not focusing on others. Again, that will be quite costly. I haven't received a satisfactory response on that, and I would like the minister or

her parliamentary assistant to provide me with how they see this moving forward. We may have an opportunity to hone down on that in committee, and I think that is an opportunity.

Another area that concerns me—the parliamentary assistant indicated this in his remarks—was a question that I had at the time when I had my briefing: Who is included in the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act? What concerns me is that some entities within the broader public service are not included. It was a question that I had for ministerial staff as well as for the bureaucracy. I simply was not satisfied with the answer that I received, and I wasn't satisfied today with the points brought forward by the parliamentary assistant. The Liberals and the government of the day have an opportunity here to refine their message and to put forward their point of view on this. I believe we should have that discussion in committee, and I think we should have that discussion here on the floor of the assembly.

As I mentioned, my third point is that previous legislation has really not done anything to improve increased accountability here on the floor of the assembly or within the government in the broader public service. I can't tell you how many pieces of legislation I've debated over my four terms here, Speaker, where we were going to end the worst scandal of all time by creating this new accountability piece by the Liberals, and then within that year there was another scandal. Even the Premier herself noted during the debates on the gas plants scandal that it was a politically motivated decision.

The challenge for this government is to indicate to the public, not just members of the opposition, that they're serious about legislation that they pass; that as we move forward, any legislation that they pass will be followed, and there wouldn't be political motivations or personal motivations that would cloud that legislation and break that legislation. As I said, we have before us two OPP investigations ongoing into the government on two major scandals. That, I think, is critical, and it's something that we must remember.

The fourth point I had—and this has bothered me over the past four months—is we're talking about requiring cabinet ministers, opposition leaders' staff and MPPs to post expenses online, and I applaud the government for doing this. I think that's critical. Where I think there is a disconnect and this part of the legislation is lacking is that it doesn't include the Speaker, it doesn't include the Clerk, and it does not include any of the Legislative Assembly staff on hospitality. That is lacking. If you're talking about tax dollars and talking about protecting tax dollars, every single tax dollar should be included here. That means every single person who works for this Legislative Assembly, and that has not been included. I will be putting forward a motion at committee, an amendment, for that. Again, I think that people deserve to know where their tax dollars are being spent, and I think that is a glaring omission in this bill.

**1000**

There is no reporting mechanism in place here, as well, when it comes to the Legislative Assembly. You'll



notice, if you look into the details of this plan, that it could be up to the Board of Internal Economy. They could choose, for example, to report once every 10 years. I think we need to clearly define that this happens. We'll have to have a conversation with the Integrity Commissioner, who will look at these expenses and then they'll have to post them. I think we have to be reasonable. Maybe she needs a month and this is a two-month process and we should report quarterly or we should report annually, but that is not defined in this piece of legislation. That's something that could be considered quite minor but if the intent of the legislation is to post these online, I think that taxpayers across the province deserve clarity. They deserve to understand when they are going to expect their MPPs' expenses to be posted online.

By the way, I think there are a number of us who actually do post online, and I know we make available our annual expenses to the public and we make them available to the media as well. I don't think there's anything that we should be ashamed of. I've worked in municipal government and I've worked on federal Parliament Hill. I must applaud the staff at our assembly for having what I would consider the most stringent laws on taxpayer dollars in any of the places I've worked. I applaud the people at finance here because they take strict control over what's expensable and what is not. Again, we have a good system here but we need to enhance it and we need to have clear rules about it.

I'm here today not only to discuss Bill 8, which I am the critic for, but I will also be speaking to an opposition day motion later this afternoon, which is a PC opposition motion to ensure that Laura Miller and Peter Faist appear before the justice committee before report writing. I had a question in the assembly yesterday, as most members will remember, asking for them to appear, and getting the support out of the government House leader, to ensure that they appear before us in committee. I didn't get the response that I wanted. We will have an opposition day motion today; I would hope that there will be some members of the Liberal caucus who would support it. I do certainly hope that my colleagues in the third party would support it, and there is a reason for that. I'm no longer the energy critic. I no longer sit on the justice committee.

Having said that, what's critically important to me is that the transparency and accountability that this government wanted to usher in back in July, when they formed their government—they promised us that this would be a new era. If it truly is a new era for transparency and accountability, then they would allow those two individuals to testify as they were expected to back in May of last year, before the writ was dropped.

If the government was truly concerned with transparency and accountability they wouldn't just pass Bill 8 and they wouldn't just listen to our concerns in the opposition and how to protect that; they would actually say that they will support these two individuals appearing before committee before report writing begins. I think

that's critical, I think that's necessary and I think that's in the best interests of the public of Ontario. I plead with the members opposite that if you are serious about supporting Bill 8, if you are serious about government accountability and transparency, why stop at Bill 8? Why stop at debate this morning? Why not support a PC opposition motion and bring in Laura Miller and Peter Faist so that we can finally, once and for all, clear the air before a report is written in the justice committee on the two cancelled gas plants, the two Auditor General reports, as well as the alleged deletion of documents and emails in the former Premier's office?

There are a lot of new members here who were not here during that period of time. I must say, Speaker—and I know you were here—those were very tense moments when we found out, for example, that the OPP was investigating the Premier of Ontario's office. I remember the bombshell that day. I was standing right here. I was given a question, the last question of question period, when we found that out. We found it out because it was reported in the *Ottawa Citizen*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*—three newspapers. Three newspapers had to work together in order to get a story out. They had pooled their resources about this ongoing OPP investigation into the cancelled gas plants. It took the OPP and three major news outlets to get to the bottom of a massive scandal, while at the same time we had the auditor probing it and the justice committee probing it.

If we want to talk about transparency and accountability, I just want to give you an example of how complex a government scandal can be and how difficult it can be to uncover it. Again, we have said numerous times in this assembly, "There won't be another scandal like the OLG, because we're bringing in legislation." Then it was, "There won't be another scandal like eHealth, because we're bringing in legislation." Then, "There won't be another scandal like Ornge, because we're bringing in legislation." Then, "There won't be another scandal like the gas plants, because we're bringing in legislation."

Forgive me if I've heard this song so many times before. Forgive me if I'm a little bit cynical and skeptical because I've seen this play out on the floor of this assembly previously. Forgive me if I want to bring forward my concerns with this bill, because I really don't think it will always be followed. I've seen this show before. Many of the members who have sat here in this assembly have seen this before. So the onus, as I said, is on the government.

As I said, the official opposition agrees with most of the bill. We've appreciated the briefings that have come forward from ministerial staff as well as the bureaucracy. As I've said, you've put forward legislation before and not necessarily followed it. That has left a bad taste in the mouths of many.

I remind you of what my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex said: "You cannot legislate ethics." So the onus will be on the government—any government, regardless of which stripe they are, regardless of who their Premier is. The onus is always on the government to

ensure they follow the letter of the law, not just its intent, and that they must ensure that they rebuild public trust.

But, as I've said, there are many challenges with this bill, and I just want to re-highlight them. I throw this out to the government to deal with the challenges. Overlap and duplication: The government has not costed this piece of legislation. There will be added bureaucracy, not that we're opposed to that on this side, but we want more details. We want to see an action plan from not only the government, but from the respective departments that are going to have to deal with this, and I think we have a tremendous opportunity during committee to speak to those who are directly affected. As I state them one more time, that will be the Ombudsman, the provincial advocate; I think we should speak to the auditor and, of course, the Integrity Commissioner. We may also want to hear from municipalities that will now be affected by this legislation, which I support, by the way. I support that clause, but I think we need to hear from them as well.

I think it's important that we find out which groups are designated and which groups are not designated in the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act. I think if we're going to designate some, we should designate all. That means the LHINs, the CCACs, I think hospitals, hydro entities—they should all be included in this piece of legislation, and I would like an assurance from the government that they will be. I think that's critical. I think that's important. We're not talking about \$200,000 with these entities, like we are with each of the MPPs here. We're talking about billions in public dollars at these entities, and that is where your biggest scandals will occur, and that is why I think we need safeguards in place. I think that is important.

Again, that just allows me this easy segue into what I had said earlier: If we are going to talk about—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'd like to remind some of the members, who will remain nameless at this point, that when they come in and out of this House, or cross in front of the Chair, they are to acknowledge the Chair. Thank you.

Continue.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** And I would like to acknowledge you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you.

I think it's important that all people who are employed by the assembly follow the same rules, especially when there are major budgets in play. I'm not suggesting that folks who are working in our cafeteria have to deal with this, but if you have employees in this assembly, you should be included in this legislation. I'm sorry. It might be uncomfortable to say so, but, at the end of the day, if we are talking about protecting tax dollars, you don't just say you're going to do it, you do it. You put forward legislation that does it, and then you follow that legislation and you prove to the public that you're serious. I believe that is something we should say.

1010

Speaker, I know I only have a few more minutes before the House rises for question period, but I did want

to acknowledge that about this time a week ago today, my city and your city were rocked by what occurred. I wanted to say to you, Speaker, that I know you've had a very difficult week, and so has your city of Hamilton. We've all spoken about the nation's capital, where I reside, and the impacts my colleagues from Orléans and Ottawa South and Centre and West Nepean and Vanier—what we've dealt with. But I would like to say at this point in time, with you in the chair—and I wish I had done this at the very beginning of my remarks—that as much as we say that Ottawa is strong and Canada is strong, I know Hamilton is, too. I want to say that to you as well as to the leader of the third party; I know it's been a very difficult week for her.

That's why I think in the last minutes I have on this I want to continue on a positive note, and so I want to end on a positive note. I think this is a great opportunity for us to talk about the values that we hold dear here in this assembly and I think it's—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I just thought of this and I wanted the assembly to know. I just want to wish the member for Nepean—Carleton a happy 40th birthday today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'd like to thank the member. It's not really a point of order, but I also wish her a happy birthday.

Continue.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Sixteen candles.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm a long way from 16, Mr. Yakabuski. Steve Clark, the member from Leeds—Grenville, was my best friend up until about two minutes ago. But I did this to him last year when it was his birthday; I interrupted question period to say it was his birthday. So yes, I'm another year older. There's a song about that; you know, another year older, deeper in debt. The province of Ontario is another year older and in a lot more debt.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** What did you say about the pension?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Vote for a pension.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I was talking about your province, our province; it's in debt.

Anyhow, thanks all very much for the birthday wishes. You've now thrown me off my game for the first time in my nine-year career here at Queen's Park.

Let's finish on a positive note. This assembly was built on the values of democracy and the common values that we share: freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of the press. A week ago, those values I think became even more dear to every member of this assembly. When we debate legislation, I think I'm going to continue to have those values in mind before I enter the floor of the assembly to discuss pieces of legislation. I think when we stand here and we discuss the values that are important to our province, we should



always remember that there are people who have sacrificed for us.

When we talk about public taxpayer dollars, we must remember that there are hard-working moms and dads, seniors and small business owners who are contributing to the fabric of this province, and they expect us to be important stewards of their tax dollars. They expect us to embrace their values and spend on what is required. I think, Speaker, you and I would agree with this: They would expect us to have a strong economy in order for us to pay for our valued and core public services.

Where people don't like sending tax dollars to Queen's Park is when they feel it is wasted. We've had examples of that in the past in this province where it's been egregious, and it's been done by all governments; that is for sure. But sometimes when we get so disconnected from the public as a government or as an assembly, that is when the worst spending scandals occur. I would encourage all members here to be vigilant on that matter and to ensure that the government is always holding accountability and transparency as a core and valued thing.

I know I have one minute left, and this is what I'd like to say to every member of this assembly: When we put forward a piece of legislation, let's ask a series of questions. Will this be a value for money? How much will this legislation cost? Who will it impact? Does it impact rural Ontario? Does it impact urban Ontario? Does it impact the suburbs? Does it impact our small businesses? Does it impact our local charities? I think these are reasonable questions for members of provincial Parliament to ask, and I think that these are reasonable questions for us to ask in the context of Bill 8. I think they're reasonable questions for us to ask in the context of the debate which will occur later on this afternoon for transparency and accountability under the name of Jim Wilson, who is the interim leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. These are legitimate questions that should be asked each and every single time.

So as I close, I again want to say thanks for the opportunity to debate. I appreciated the briefing from the minister. We agree with most of this bill. We have some concerns; I've laid them out. We all know that I've just turned 40, the province is in debt and I think that there are a number of questions that we have to raise. I hope that was a good summary, because it took me 40 minutes to get here. Thank you all very much. Have a great day.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to introduce the mayor-elect of the municipality of Meaford, Barb Clumpus, and her husband, Dr. Frank Clumpus. They're in the visitors' gallery. We welcome you to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a delight to welcome Ontario Pharmacists Association board member, and also my constituent, Brandon Tenebaum, to the House.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Please help me welcome the grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School in the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize page captain Greg Van Boekel's family, who are here with us today. In the gallery are his parents, Mike and Jennifer; his sister Hannah; his brother Jacob, who is a former page; and Greg's grandparents, Betty Hampson and Gerry and Thea Van Boekel. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'd like to welcome a board member from the pharmacists' association as well as a person from my riding, Marita Tonkin, to the Legislature today.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to introduce Dan Sidsworth, who is a correctional officer at Maplehurst Correctional Complex and is also the chair of OPSEU's Ministry Employee Relations Committee; Monte Vieselmeyer, who is a correctional officer at Toronto South Detention Centre and is a member of the Ministry Employee Relations Committee; and Clark Moss, a correctional officer at Central East Correctional Centre and a member of the Ministry Employee Relations Committee. I'd also like to welcome Mr. Jason Godin, the national vice-president, and a correctional officer, with the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers; and Mr. Chris Bucholtz, who is a correctional officer and the Ontario vice-president of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** It's my pleasure, on behalf of all members, to welcome student members of the University of Toronto Progressive Conservative Campus Association. They are Alex Robinson, Vlad Yakovlyev, Alanna Newman and Felix Burns. Welcome.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Members will know that today is the Ontario Pharmacists Association lobby day. We have many members of the Ontario Pharmacists Association board with us. From Hamilton Centre, I'd like to welcome Stacey D'Angelo.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm delighted to welcome Jim Semchism here. He is a pharmacist in London North Centre. He's on the board of the Ontario Pharmacists Association and provides excellent service in the Hamilton Road area at Ealing Pharmacy. Welcome, Jim.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'd like to introduce Bill Roberts, who is in the east members' gallery and whom I had the pleasure of meeting this morning. He is here with the Ontario Pharmacists Association. Please welcome him.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I too would like to welcome both the national vice-president and Ontario vice-president of UCCO-SACC-CSN, Mr. Jason Godin and Mr. Chris Bucholtz. They are joined at Queen's Park today by a number of correctional officers from the Ministry Employee Relations Committee, including Monte Vieselmeyer, Clark Moss and Dan Sidsworth.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to mark Republic Day of Turkey today by welcoming the Consul

General of Turkey, Mr. Ali Rıza Güney, and the vice-consul, Mr. Gökhan Toy.

I also want to welcome several esteemed dignitaries from the Turkish community: Dr. Mehmet Bor, president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations; Mrs. Yıldız Ünsal, director of the Turkish Federation Community Foundation; Mr. Yaman Üzümeri, the chair of the FCTA's external relations council and vice-president of Ankara library; and Mr. Nazif Kurt, vice-president of the Turkish Culture and Folklore Society of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to participate in the raising of the Turkish flag today at 12 noon.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'd like all members to welcome Raj Sandhu to the chamber today. He is here with family visiting from India. He's also the newly re-elected councillor for Bradford West Gwillimbury. His family members include Rana Sandhu, Kiran Sandhu, Balwant Sandhu, Parminder Sandhu, Navreet Sandhu and his daughter Simran.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'd like to welcome Mr. Sean Simpson, who owns Simpson's Pharmacy in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I had the pleasure of meeting with him today. Welcome.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I'd like to welcome, for a second time, Jason Godin of the correctional officers' union, from Kingston and the Islands.

Hoş geldiniz to the members of the Turkish community.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd like to welcome Mike Cavanagh, an Ontario Pharmacists Association board member, who lives and resides, and has his practice, in Lindsay, Ontario.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It's my pleasure this morning to introduce the Ontario Pharmacists Association, including Dennis Darby, the CEO; and Deb Salmarche, the board chair. They are here at Queen's Park today with their colleagues. Welcome.

The OPA is hosting a reception this evening in room 228/230. All MPPs are invited to attend.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I want to introduce the parents of our page captain Rachel Huang. Her parents are Ping Yi, also known as Liza; and Xi Justin Huang. They're all from my riding of Thornhill. It's great to see young people so politically engaged. Welcome.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'd like to introduce an area farm boy from Little Lake: Andrew Hamilton. He's a rep on the OPA board and a fourth-year student at University of Waterloo, pharmacy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We thank all our guests for being here.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question this morning is to the Acting Premier and is regarding the recent election results here in the city of Toronto.

By capturing nearly 40% of the vote and winning by a margin of over 64,000 votes, Toronto residents elected a new mayor and, ultimately, a new council with a strong focus on resolving traffic gridlock.

Mayor-elect Tory has sent a strong signal that he intends to move forward with big improvements in Toronto's transit infrastructure, including his signature campaign piece called SmartTrack.

Acting Premier, how does your government plan to work with the new mayor and council to move forward on their mandate to improve transit in Toronto?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy House leader, Minister of Agriculture and the member from Nepean—Carleton, come to order, please.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Of course, I thank the member opposite for that question.

I've already had the opportunity to send some correspondence out to Mayor-elect Tory, along with mayors who have been elected right across the GTHA, right across the province of Ontario.

I think what's most exciting about the results that we saw take place not just in Toronto but right across the region is how much energy and passion there is with respect to the debates around transit.

I look forward to working with Mayor-elect Tory and mayors and councils right across the province so that we can successfully deliver our \$29-billion infrastructure plan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Acting Premier: Mayor-elect Tory's SmartTrack plans to deliver a new rail system in the existing GO train corridor within seven years. It is a London-style surface-rail subway that moves the most people in the shortest time across the entire city. Tory's SmartTrack plan promises 22 new station stops and five interchanges with the TTC rapid transit network.

After hearing Premier Kathleen Wynne's "hallelujah" remarks, we know the Premier is excited to work with the new Mayor-elect Tory. Is the government planning to implement SmartTrack, or do we have some other plan?

1040

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** As I mentioned in my initial response to this member's question, there is, of course, a great desire on the part of myself and every member of this government to work very closely with all of our municipal partners so we can deliver on the ambitious plans that we have for the province's future.

What's really important to note, not just about the proposed SmartTrack that Mayor-elect Tory has put forward, is that in our 10-year plan, we have a very fundamental piece of that plan, which is two-way, all-day regional express rail for GO. That will provide up to 15-minute service on all of our GO rail corridors over the next 10 years—electrified service. It's something we're very excited about, and there are wonderful opportunities



within that plan, from my perspective, for us to be in alignment with not only SmartTrack but a number of other positive projects that will benefit communities right across the region.

As I said earlier, I look forward to working with all mayors and councils to deliver good results for the people.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Acting Premier: Your government has promised \$15 billion for greater Toronto and Hamilton area transit expansion over the next decade, but much of this money is already spoken for and already allocated.

The people of Ontario have heard many transit promises from your Liberal government, from two-way, all-day GO service to high-speed rail from Windsor to Toronto to a Scarborough subway. If you're going ahead with SmartTrack, are these other transit projects a lower priority now, and how do you intend to pay for all of them?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** There's lots of great news on this side of the House, of course, with respect to the ambitious plans that we have for the next 10 years. I'm not quite sure where the member opposite is getting his facts or information.

What I do know is that the Ministry of Transportation and the wonderful team at Metrolinx will continue to work very closely with all mayors, all councils and all other municipally owned transit authorities so that we can deliver some tremendous results for the people, including the two-way, all-day regional express rail. That transformation of GO trains and GO service right across the GTHA and beyond will benefit communities like Kitchener, Milton, Barrie and so many others. That's the work that we're focused on.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to be quick with this. The shots back and forth are going to stop. If they're not stopped by you, I'll stop them. It stops now.

New question.

#### ADOPTION

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My next question this morning is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services and is regarding the adoption crisis occurring here in Ontario. Minister, as you know, across Ontario, there are approximately 8,000 children waiting for permanent homes in this province. Adoption is a provincially regulated issue, and it is a lifelong commitment.

Minister, do you agree with the Right Honourable Governor General David Johnston that there is an adoption crisis occurring here in our province?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you for the question. I do take my responsibilities on the adoption file very seriously. I know that the number of children who have been adopted in Ontario has continued to increase.

We have less and less children waiting to be adopted. We are very focused in particular on children in aboriginal communities, where there are perhaps more challenges to proceeding with adoptions. We're working very closely with those communities to make sure that things are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

My commitment is to continue to look at the issues and opportunities associated with the adoption file, and I'd be pleased to meet with the member to discuss that more fully.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the minister: You will know that it is often easier to adopt on other continents than it is to adopt across regional boundaries here in Ontario because each CAS office operates in a silo within their own territory.

In 2009, prior to his appointment, Governor General David Johnston led an expert panel on the adoption crisis. Five years later, the major recommendation remains unfulfilled. Sadly, government red tape and inter-provincial barriers often prevent adoptions from other parts of Canada.

Minister, this is about children in our society. What can we do to work together to help resolve this crisis and ensure that waiting families are matched with children in need?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Again, thank you to the member for the question. He commented on the role of the children's aid societies in adoptions in Ontario. We've made tremendous progress in coordinating adoption efforts between CASs. We actually have a reduction in the number of CASs in Ontario. They are working very closely while maintaining the protocols that have been established for adoptions in Ontario.

I understand his point about international versus domestic. I pursued an international adoption myself until I became pregnant with my twins. I'm very familiar with that process as compared to what we have here in Canada and in Ontario. When we look at the file, there has been great progress. Is there more work to be done? Absolutely. Are there some issues associated with adoptions in Ontario? Absolutely. We'll continue to work on that, and I'm happy to provide a personal briefing on that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the minister: According to the Adoption Council of Canada, it takes up to nine years for someone to navigate the complicated adoption process. The real adoption crisis here in Ontario is that a bloated and broken system is preventing the timely match of waiting families with children in need. The longer a young child stays in foster care, the harder it is for healthy attachment to begin. As a new father, it breaks my heart to think of children growing up without a loving home.

Minister, November is National Adoption Awareness Month. What specific steps are you committed to taking over the next month to help resolve Ontario's adoption crisis?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** First of all, congratulations to the member on being—is it a new father or having a second child? I'm not quite sure.

We know there are some opportunities on the adoption file. I think it's important, though, when we use numbers around the adoption file, that we be very careful, because sometimes we're talking about averages. We have to look at the specifics of cases.

We have an adoption strategy in Ontario. Again, I'm happy to brief the member on that. As I said, our particular focus is around the aboriginal community and helping to facilitate more appropriate adoptions in care, making sure those are culturally sensitive. Nothing is more important to me than the future of children in our province. I will continue to provide the appropriate leadership on this file and I'm happy to talk to the member further.

### POWER PLANTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. When the Deputy Premier and President of the Treasury Board got her mandate letter from the Premier she was instructed to "increase our government's accountability and transparency." Does that include ending the government's attempt to cover up what happened with the gas plants by ensuring that Peter Faist and Laura Miller testify at the gas plants committee?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the leader of the third party for the question. I have spoken often in this House about our government's commitment to being open and transparent in making sure that we've got principles in place that ensure that there is more enhanced transparency and accountability when it comes to government functions. That's why we are really proud that we have tabled government and MPP transparency and accountability legislation, which we are hoping will pass through this House.

Also, Speaker, that is why we have been very clear in stating that it is time for the justice committee to complete its work. It is time for the justice committee to start the work of writing its report. The committees have been working for three years. They have listened to about 90 witnesses. Hundreds and thousands of documents have been considered. It is time for them to give some advice.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I am just going to offer a caution as opposed to a withdrawal: Please be guarded with your language. It was very close. I appreciate the member taking that under advisement.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, legislation means nothing if the government is not prepared to keep their word and start being transparent and accountable to the people of this province.

New Democrats fought tooth and nail to get the details about the \$1.1-billion gas plant scandal in the first place. We uncovered the facts about the cancelled gas plants, that they didn't cost \$230 million, as the Liberals had suggested, but they in fact cost \$1.1 billion; we un-

covered that the Liberals put their own political interests first, ahead of the people of Ontario; and we learned that Liberal insiders wiped computers to try to hide evidence from the people.

1050

Will the minister responsible for accountability and transparency, the head of Treasury Board—will that minister tell her Liberal colleagues on the gas plants committee to be truly transparent and fully accountable, to stop hiding the truth and make sure that Laura Miller and Peter Faist actually testify at that committee?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** We have been absolutely clear on this point. We want the justice committee to finish its work. During the campaign, we were very clear that we want the justice committee to engage in report writing, given the extensive amount of work that the members of that committee have done. I remind the leader of the third party—her question, I would suggest to you, Speaker, was full of contradictions, because on April 29, merely three days before the third party decided not to support the budget in this House, a member from her own party, the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, moved a motion in the committee stating that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy begin report writing in open session.

Speaker, what has changed? This was three days before a campaign was called. We agree; I think it is time that we should get the work and report writing—I ask the opposition parties to stop stalling the work in the committee. Let's get back to work in justice committee.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I think it's shameful that the House leader doesn't tell the whole story when we're talking about accountability and transparency. We absolutely indicated we wanted to continue to have witnesses come to that committee, and that House leader knows it. Shame on the Liberals once again for twisting the truth.

According to police investigators, Peter Faist is at the centre—at the centre—of the computer-wiping scandal in the Premier's office. Laura Miller, the deputy chief of staff of the former Premier, was orchestrating that scheme. Now Ontarians deserve to know what information was so important to the Liberals that they used—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

Come to order. And stay that way.

Please finish.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians deserve to know: What information was so important to be hidden that the Liberals used military-grade software to make sure it got wiped out? They deserve to know who gave the order.

So the question goes back, frankly, to the head of the Treasury Board. In your mandate letter—one more time, I want to remind that minister that increasing the government's accountability and transparency is her job. When is she going to do it?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** With all due respect, the kind of allegations and assertions that the leader of the third party



is making are something that the justice committee should not be looking at. That is exactly the kind of stuff that the Ontario Provincial Police are investigating. We should not insert ourselves in a police investigation. I think that matter should be left up to the police, which is an arm's-length investigation from the functions of the government. In fact, the OPP witnesses, when they came to the justice committee, said the same thing: "Do not engage in work that we are doing."

So I ask the members: Let's get back to the mandate of that committee, and that is to give guidance to the government as to how decisions around large energy infrastructure should be made. That was the mandate of the committee. That's what we need to focus on. That is why we brought a motion in the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly to refer the Ministry of Energy to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy so that members there can resume their work. The members from the opposition are dragging their feet.

### GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Deputy Premier. Does the Deputy Premier and head of the Treasury Board think that privatizing and outsourcing IT services at an increased cost of \$200 million is a good idea when we can do that same work in-house for much less?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member opposite. I welcome the opportunity to clarify some of the erroneous information that has been dropped in this House. It is true that we need IT consultants. We need them to provide services and programs that Ontarians need in a cost-effective, efficient and convenient way. Ontarians expect their services to be accessible digitally.

We actually have done a very good job reducing our reliance on IT consultants. I think everyone would acknowledge that there are occasions where we actually need to turn to those task-specific consultants, where we don't have the expertise internally, but where we do have the expertise internally, we are bringing those consultants into the OPS. I look forward to the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Liberal government keeps insisting it is looking for ways to save money and rationalize the way that we run our province. We have IT professionals, but instead of using the professionals who work for the Ontario public service, the Liberals have increased the use of outside consultants by 63% in the last five years. It's just more privatization by stealth and more cost to Ontarians.

Does the President of the Treasury Board, responsible for saving money, think that this makes any sense whatsoever?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I can tell you we've worked hard to figure out where that 63% number comes from, because it's simply not true. In fact, you might remember, in 2002, the Auditor General delivered a scathing report on the use of IT consultants. We were

elected in 2003, and since then, we have achieved results. We have cut in half our reliance on consultants since that time. Around 1,500 consulting positions have been converted to OPS staff, most of which were IT positions. The result has been an ongoing savings of \$60 million a year.

In fact, we're not done. We're moving to convert an additional 90 IT consultants, a further \$3.6-million reduction. So I think we actually agree.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The minister might want to talk about action from 2003; I'm talking about an Auditor General's review of much more recent history.

The bottom line is, Ontario now has 63% more consultants doing IT work than it did five years ago—not 11 years ago, five years ago. It costs more than double to hire a consultant than it does to do the work in-house. There are more consultants and we're paying them more money. Those are just the facts.

Now, I can understand if the head of Treasury Board, the former Minister of Health, is having eHealth déjà vu over there across the aisle. Will the head of Treasury Board take the lessons learned from eHealth and, in fact, stop outsourcing and privatizing IT services, bring them back in-house and save the people of Ontario \$200 million?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm one who believes that intelligent, well-meaning people armed with the same facts will come to the same conclusion, so I am offering an opportunity to actually make sure that the NDP has the right facts. They have been claiming that the government is spending \$700 million a year on IT consultants. It's simply not true. The number was \$130 million.

What the opposition has done is it has included things like our Microsoft Office licences in that \$700 million. If they think that we should develop our own version of Microsoft Office—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

You have time for a wrap-up.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I just simply do not, cannot, buy the argument that we should be developing our own Internet service within government, our own Microsoft Office program.

### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. John Yakubski:** Last week, I asked the Premier, who deflected a question on the gas plant scandal—my question is for the Deputy Premier. Last week, I asked the Premier. She deflected it to the House leader. He gave a somewhat dithering, obstructionist response to questions with regard to the gas plant scandal and the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, which had been interviewing witnesses.

We've asked specifically—and the Premier is quoted in Hansard as saying she wants all the facts to come out at this committee. We have two witnesses: Laura Miller

and Peter Faist, eyewitnesses to the caper. They know who deleted the emails, they know who destroyed documents and they know who had unauthorized access to the Premier's office.

So we've asked, and I will ask you again: You're in the big chair today. Make a decision. Will you allow Laura Miller and Peter Faist to come before that committee so that the facts can be known and we can put this baby to bed?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

I will now—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Government House leader.

*Interjections.*

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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First of all, I didn't recognize you. Second of all, the next person who speaks when I'm trying to get quiet will get warned.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I apologize, Speaker. Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Again, I observe the member with amusement—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** —with his version of logic that he presents. What he's talking about, again, is very clear.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Leeds-Grenville, come to order.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** The matters that he's—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds-Grenville is warned.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, the matters the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is referencing, the way he's characterizing them, are clearly within the purview of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Speaker, as you know, there is an ongoing investigation into that whole matter, and it is up to the OPP to determine what next steps they should be taking and which witnesses they should be talking to. That is not the mandate of the justice committee. The mandate of the justice committee is to look into the decision-making around the relocation of gas plants.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Back to the Acting Premier: The House leader's a lawyer. He knows that the OPP cannot force Laura Miller or Peter Faist to give a statement, but the committee can, if you would allow them to come before this committee.

This morning, you tabled for second reading your Bill 8. I don't know how many times you used the words "accountability" and "transparency." Well, this is your

opportunity to put some action into those words, not hollow words which we usually get from the Liberal Party.

This is a time to stand up and take action. This is the last opportunity. We have an opposition day motion today that will call upon this House to bring Laura Miller and Peter Faist before that committee so that we can hear from them and get the facts. The Premier will have her completed investigation. We'll get to write that report, but the people of Ontario will not be denied the final adjudication of what happened there, and that is what your actions or your failure to act is causing today. You're keeping the facts away from the people. Stand up today and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I want to thank the member from Nepean-Carleton for referencing the speech from the throne yesterday. This is what the speech from the throne says: "And to ensure that its decisions are always made responsibly, openly and in the best interests of Ontarians, your government will take steps to allow the justice committee to write its report."

That is coming from the speech from the throne which, by the way, was passed in this very House. The speech from the throne clearly says that the government will allow the justice committee to write its report. We are doing exactly that. We have asked the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly to refer the Ministry of Energy to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy so that the justice committee—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Without the Conservative candidates appearing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The deputy House leader is warned.

Finish, please. Wrap up.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** We have asked the Legislative Assembly committee—so that the justice committee can start the process of writing a report and giving its recommendations to the government.

## GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. The President of the Treasury Board's mandate letter says she's responsible for conducting an ongoing review of IT service delivery "including ensuring that costs and expenditures provide value for money"

Does the Deputy Premier think that the estimated \$350 million spent to construct the Guelph data centre, a facility whose services are in fact being contracted out, makes sense?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I really think it's important that the NDP get their facts straight when it comes to IT. This is very important work, Speaker. We welcome the criticism and the opposition from the opposition, but it's important that we start with the right facts.

The member opposite has said that the government is spending \$700 million on consultants—simply not true.



There is a mysterious number floating out there about how much we've increased reliance on consultants; the truth is, Speaker, that we have reduced our reliance on consultants by 50%, saving tens of millions of dollars. We know there is more work to do and we are committed to doing that work.

The Guelph data centre that the member has referenced is a very important part of Ontario's IT plan; we are very proud of that centre. I'm not quite sure what her criticism of that is, but we are very proud of that data centre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'll make my criticism very clear. Mr. Speaker, the minister is supposedly tasked with finding savings and eliminating waste. Right now, it's estimated that the Guelph data centre's servers are only being used to 20% of their capacity, yet the government is contracting out data storage to a privately operated cloud. Perhaps it's convenient for that data and those emails to be in a cloud somewhere instead of a secure facility run by the trained, qualified IT professionals in the OPS, but why is this government wasting money by contracting out data storage to the private sector when Ontario already has the capacity to do those services in-house and the people of this province have already paid for it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** That's exactly what we're doing. We invested a significant amount of money in that data centre; there's another data centre in Kingston, and we are consolidating work into those centres. Again, I actually think we agree that the right thing to do is to use the data centres that we have invested heavily in for the best possible value.

There has been concern about using the cloud, and I think it is important that the member understand that the only information that is on the cloud is actually public-facing information. Our ontario.ca website, for example, is on the cloud; there is no personal information stored there.

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I'm grateful for the hard work of Ontario's corrections staff, who play such an important role in keeping our communities safe. This is particularly relevant and of considerable concern in my riding of Kingston and the Islands, where we have five correctional facilities. Recently, the minister joined me in Kingston along with a panel of experts from the field of corrections at a town hall event that I hosted at Queen's University. We had experts from a variety of organizations, including the law department at Queen's, Youth Diversion, the John Howard Society and, of course, the federal correctional officers' union. I was happy to have the minister and discuss this issue that hits so close to home.

Discussions about corrections are important, but what Kingstonians and Ontarians expect to see from our government is action. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us what has been done to take action on this issue?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for raising a very important issue and for her invitation to the panel discussion that she hosted at Queen's University.

During the introduction of guests I mentioned that we have got some correctional officers who are visiting, sitting in the public gallery. Through them, I want to first of all thank all our correctional officers for their hard work, professionalism and dedication in keeping our communities safe every day.

Our goal is to build stronger and safer communities. At the round table, we discussed the clear mandate that I was given by the Premier to transform our correctional system. I discussed the action that we are taking in addressing capacity issues while working to ensure the safety of all our staff members and our inmates, and also ensuring that support for rehabilitation and reintegration for our inmates is in place to minimize recidivism. I look forward to providing more details in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Thank you to the minister for his response. I'm happy to hear that the minister will be taking action to address the state of our correctional system in Ontario, but we still hear of concerns around mental health services and critical programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders into our communities. These issues are of interest to all Ontarians as they affect recidivism and have an impact on community safety as a whole. That is why it is important that we work together with all of our partners in corrections to address these issues. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Please elaborate on the specific steps that you are taking to address these concerns.

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**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, we are focused on a system that keeps our correctional staff and inmates safe while providing more opportunities for training and rehabilitation. That means continually working to improve conditions at every institution across the province by: enhancing education, rehabilitative and training programs for offenders; improving services for mentally ill, female and aboriginal offenders; improving discharge planning and community reintegration; and addressing both capacity and innovation within our correctional system.

I know that our OPSEU partners and all our corrections partners share the same goals. We are already working to improve the safety and security of both correctional staff and inmates. We are moving on: rolling out protective equipment for our correctional officers; developing a regional intermittent centre strategy; and hiring over 300 new officers by the end of this year, not to mention that we are hiring more mental health nurses to provide better care for the inmates who are in our care and custody.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Contrary to all your spin, your government is not acting in an open, transparent or accountable manner. I'd like to bring to the public's attention an important detail

from the MaRS audited financial statements: "In 2011, MaRS Phase 2 Inc. ... exercised an option in the amended ground lease with ARE to sublet the property to Phase 2 Trust, thereby enabling it to develop and manage this property." Minister, this was immediately after you loaned MaRS \$224 million to complete phase 2. What part of the contract was not amended that has now cost us an additional \$65 million, not to mention the millions in interest that we're also paying now?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I have to say I think the member opposite needs to acknowledge publicly that the building has been valued at or above our investment in that building. Again, I ask the member opposite, what would they have done in the face of an economic downturn that caused real challenges for ARE? Would you have left the hole in the ground at the corner of College and University Avenue, or would you have stepped in to do the responsible thing, where taxpayers are actually getting an enhanced benefit? We took the steps, and we are taking steps, that are necessary in order to actually have an asset that works for the people of the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Maybe I could have a page bring the financials for MaRS to the minister.

Again, MaRS makes it quite clear in their financial statements that they revised the phase 2 agreement with ARE after your government loaned them \$224 million. MaRS amended the agreement to allow them to both develop and manage the property. Your government has repeatedly stated in estimates that you spent \$65 million to buy out ARE's phase 2 operations and management rights. How can you spend \$65 million to buy out the ARE contract in 2014 when MaRS's own audited statements say they took ownership of that same contract in 2011?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's very important to us on this side that we are responsible with every single dollar that taxpayers have paid, Speaker. In order to ensure that we are actually doing the right thing when it comes to the situation at MaRS, we have asked a couple of very prominent people to give us advice—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** What skulduggery are you up to?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will withdraw.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We have engaged Carol Stephenson, the former dean at the Ivey School of Business in London, and Michael Nobrega, formerly of OMERS, to give us advice on what the right thing to do is.

Let me repeat: The value of the building has been on several occasions valued at or more than what we have already invested. This is a good deal for Ontario, Speaker.

## HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, the Liberal

government is undermining our public health care system by allowing secret medical tourism into Ontario.

Ontarians hold the public health care system dear. Front-line health care workers and New Democrats will not stand by and allow it to be dismantled. Allowing people to use their credit card to jump the line goes against every principle of medicare. It goes against care being based on needs and not on ability to pay. It is time for this Liberal government to end the secrecy and come clean on medical tourism.

Will the minister tell Ontarians how many hospitals are already in the business of medical tourism and how many Ontarians have been bumped down the line and forced to wait longer for their care?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. First of all, zero patients have been bumped down the line. I think it's important that we not provide misinformation to Ontarians and that it gives me an opportunity, as Minister of Health, to be absolutely clear that Ontario patients must and will always come first. Hospitals are not allowed, and will not be allowed, Mr. Speaker, to displace any Ontarians in favour of international patients.

Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians have timely access to the best quality hospital care. I want to say as well that I want to thank specifically the RAO, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, and their partners for flagging this issue and bringing their concerns to me. In fact, I met with their head, Doris Grinspun, last Monday specifically on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to elaborate in the supplementary exactly what measures we have already put in place, as well as further measures coming up.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Speaker, I can't believe that we have a Minister of Health who would stand in this House and defend medical tourism, defend a system that will undo everything that we have done to make sure that care is based on needs, not on ability to pay. Medical tourism will create—

*Interjections.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** They know as well as we know that medical tourism will create a two-tier system where people with big wallets will jump the queue. This is wrong. This goes against every principle that we hold dear. They know this, but yet he stands in this House and defends this.

Nurses, doctors and midwives are at Queen's Park today. They are calling for a ban on medical tourism. They are the front-line workers. They can see that this government's plan is creating a two-tier system. It is putting profit ahead of patient care.

Why won't the minister listen to Ontarians, act immediately, ban this medical tourism and stop rich people from jumping the queue?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I quite frankly don't know where to begin. This idea that the member opposite has that somehow these patients are jumping the queue is absolutely not true. The allegation that she suggests, that this somehow is affecting the patient care of Ontarians, is absolutely not true.



But the truth, Mr. Speaker, is that when I first had this conversation with the RNAO and others, I began a review process through my own ministry. We sent a survey out to the hospitals which are actually engaged in this as well or thinking of being engaged in international patients. We sent out a survey to get more information. We're reviewing the results of that survey. I mentioned that I met with the RNAO as recently as last Monday on this as well. I take their concerns very, very seriously. But, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that we have already implemented measures where zero public dollars can be used to pay for this type of care.

Ontario patients must and will always come first, Mr. Speaker. Any revenue generated has to go back into hospitals to improve patient care. But we are looking at this, and I'll have further information later.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, during the election campaign, I met with thousands of constituents, and they raised a range of issues. One of the things that they raised was that many of them have family members who are struggling with developmental disabilities, and they need help.

In my riding of Etobicoke Centre, we are fortunate to have organizations like Community Living that provide support to those families and those individuals. But since becoming MPP, I have heard very clearly more support is needed for people and the families of those who have developmental disabilities.

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Advocates have asked for more specialized care that is targeted to individual goals and needs. I know that we heard calls for greater support in this House yesterday, when the report of the Select Committee on Developmental Services was tabled. I know that through the budget the government has chosen to prioritize and invest further to support those with developmental disabilities.

Minister, could you tell us who will benefit from these investments and how this will impact the lives of those individuals and their families?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre for this question. I was certainly proud to rise in the House yesterday in response to the select committee on developmental disabilities' report and to detail the many actions our government continues to take in this area. As we transform developmental services in this province, our goal is to ensure that everyone can participate fully in our communities.

The 2014 budget placed a further emphasis on this transformation through our \$810-million investment, the single largest investment in the developmental services sector in the province's history. This investment is expanding direct funding to serve 21,000 more individuals and families. Specifically, we will be supporting 8,000 children and their families through Special Services at

Home and 13,000 adults through the Passport Program. In this way we will provide more choice and flexibility within the existing system to better promote inclusion, independence and choice.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'm sure those people impacted will appreciate the significant investment.

Minister, yesterday you mentioned that the government was exceeding its projected targets in providing direct funding supports for individuals with developmental disabilities and to their families.

However, as you know, there are in some cases individuals, both adults and children, continuing to wait for funding from these programs, and this includes constituents in my own riding of Etobicoke Centre. Getting access to these funds so that individuals can start to enjoy more programming and support is obviously critical and top-of-mind to these people and their families.

Minister, how is the government tackling these wait-lists and when can these adults and children in Etobicoke Centre and beyond expect to enjoy that support?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We committed in the budget to eliminate the current wait-list for the direct funding programs Passport and Special Services at Home, and our government is making significant progress as thousands of people are already benefiting from our budget investment.

Since our budget passed in July of this year, 7,900 people and their families have been approved for direct funding, exceeding our original targets for this year by at least 20%. We're already more than 35% toward our goal to provide direct funding to 21,000 people.

We also, as of October 1, updated the services and supports eligible for funding under Passport so adults with a developmental disability can: get temporary respite for their caregivers; take part in community classes and recreational programs; develop work, volunteer and daily life skills; hire a support worker; and create their own life plans to reach their goals.

### TAXATION

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Minister, let me quote from your mandate letter from the Premier: "Continuing to work with the tourism industry and regional tourism organizations to support the sector's economic growth and encourage collaboration among tourism industry partners."

Minister, a report by Fred Lazar of the Schulich School of Business at York University finds that increasing the aviation fuel tax in Ontario could mean a loss of nearly 3,000 jobs and decrease provincial GDP by almost \$100 million annually.

My question to you is: What economic analysis have you done on the impact of job and revenue losses that this aviation tax will cause?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question. As you know, aviation fuel is impacted not just by what the

province of Ontario has recently applied; it hasn't even changed since 1992. The majority of the fees associated with the airlines is actually a federal component.

Notwithstanding that, we also recognize that Ontario has benefited from greater runs, greater airline investments and more opportunities in the province. We also have mitigating opportunities in some of the remote communities that we'll be looking at and we look forward to continuing to enhance tourism and activity—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Who's next?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, for the warning.

*Supplementary?*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Minister, in July, Sunwing announced that they will begin to operate flights out of Buffalo instead of Pearson international airport, largely to avoid the increased costs. Just last week, officials were here from Buffalo international airport, launching a campaign to attract travellers south of the border. They have bought ads on the Gardiner; they are running TV commercials and have a website to emphasize the potential savings to Ontarians.

You like to point at and blame other levels of government, but the bottom line here is, your government's aviation fuel tax increase is bad business here in Ontario. Minister, are you not concerned at all that this increase in taxes is driving businesses and travellers out of Ontario? Are you not at all concerned?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We are stimulating and investing in our economy to promote greater growth and greater opportunities and maintain a very competitive business climate, including the areas around tourism.

Here's what the Buffalo airport's senior marketing manager noted. He said the following: that he, like many other residents of western New York, will use the Toronto airport to fly to international destinations.

We recognize that Toronto Pearson is a very competitive airport and will continue to be so when we look at other airports and other opportunities around the world. We are an international hub. It's still more effective to operate from Toronto and the surrounding regions in Ontario.

What's also important to note is that there are increased investments and increased flights coming out of Ontario than ever before, and we will continue to enhance and support that.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Mr. Speaker, last month the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services informed me that male offenders from Windsor and Chatham serving intermittent sentences would report to London rather than the new \$247-million facility in their own community. As you know, conditions at the London facility are deplorable, with constant instances of overcrowding, understaffing and lockdowns.

With the minister now announcing plans to build a new facility in London, will male offenders from Windsor be required to report to this new facility, or does the minister ever plan to allow male intermittent sentences to be served at the South West Detention Centre?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member from Windsor West for asking the question. I am very much looking forward to working with the member on very important issues dealing with community safety and correctional services. I have appreciated our conversations thus far on issues and particularly the issues that she has raised in regard to the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre.

As I have spoken in the House before, I have had the opportunity to visit EMDC along with our superintendent and members of the local union and of the provincial union as well, to better understand the kind of challenges and solutions that we need to determine together. As a result, we are not only implementing the 12-point action plan that my predecessor, the Attorney General, put into action—11 out of those 12 are already in action; we have also announced the building of a new regional intermittent detention centre so that we can separate intermittent inmates from those who are sentenced.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I don't believe I actually received an answer to my question as to whether Windsor and Chatham intermittent offenders will then be returned to Windsor.

We also learned from the minister during his recent tour of EMDC in London that one of the reasons that South West Detention Centre in Windsor isn't fully operational is because it is currently understaffed; therefore, male intermittent offenders are being sent to the EMDC in London. We all know how successful that has been.

In fact, the frequent lockdowns on the weekends at EMDC are due to staff shortages, leading to volatile, ongoing situations there. Minister, the short-staffing of correctional facilities is not just a problem in Windsor, it's not just a problem in London, but across the entire correctional system in this province. It's a health and safety issue for the staff and a safety and service issue for the offenders.

The minister mentioned hiring 300 officers. Windsor alone would take up one fifth of who you plan to hire for this entire province. What will the minister do to fix the problem of staff shortages at existing correctional facilities and ensure all new facilities are adequately staffed?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** We're really proud of the state-of-the-art detention centre that has been built in Windsor called the South West Detention Centre. We are even prouder of the fact that we worked very closely with our correctional staff, both management and correctional officers, in terms of the design and the operation of the South West Detention Centre, so that not only will we enhance the health and safety of our correctional staff but also the safety of inmates as well.

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The South West Detention Centre is at 80% capacity right now. The reason it is at 80% capacity is by plan.



We have a transition plan. You don't just open a jail and fill it up with people. The health and safety of our correctional staff, both managers and correctional officers, is extremely important. We want to make sure that there's a plan and that there's proper transition in place.

As for intermittent from Windsor to EMDC, we're talking about four to six individuals only. But I look forward to continuing to work with the member opposite.

### FLU IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, as I am sure you and most members of this House are aware, flu season has begun in Ontario. My constituents in the riding of Durham are concerned about how easy it is to catch the flu. Sneezing and coughing, lack of hand-washing and children playing at school all make it easy and inevitable for us to get sick this season. Sometimes the individuals who are most vulnerable to the flu, like the seniors in my riding, can experience awful complications such as pneumonia.

Speaker, through you, I ask the minister: What is the government doing to stop the spread of influenza this season?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I want to thank the member from Durham for this very timely question. Yes, flu season is here. That's why Ontario is once again offering a free flu shot—say that three times fast—for everyone six months of age and older who lives, works or goes to school in the province.

As of last week, the free flu vaccine—I'm not going to get that wrong—was made available at doctors' offices and at community and workplace flu immunization clinics. I even kicked off the beginning of the season last Thursday by giving a flu shot to Galen Weston, who is the executive chairman and president of Loblaws, at one of the downtown Loblaws pharmacies. He said he didn't feel a thing. This was to promote the fact that can you now get your flu shot from a trained pharmacist at almost 2,400 pharmacies across Ontario.

Each year, the flu shot prevents the need for 30,000 visits to hospital ERs and 200,000 to doctors' offices—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —and I'm looking forward to the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm sure you are. Supplementary?

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, through you, I wish to thank the minister. It is great to know that the flu shot will be so easily available for my constituents to access this year. As a matter of fact, I will be taking my flu shot next week in Port Perry at the local Shoppers Drug Mart.

My constituents in Durham are extremely involved in their community, which makes the spread of the flu even easier. Health care professionals suggest that getting lots of rest, fluids and handwashing are methods to prevent the spread of the flu, but we all know this can't prevent the spread of the flu on its own.

I often hear people say that they won't need a flu shot this year because they had one last year. Another thing I hear is that the flu shot can actually cause the flu. Speaker, I wish to ask the minister through you, is there any truth to these rumours?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Before I begin to answer that, I want to also mention the fact that we have so many pharmacists here today as well. Last year, they actually administered almost three quarters of a million flu vaccines to Ontarians, and I know it's going to be even more this year.

I'm happy to set the record straight so that Ontarians are informed about the flu and the flu shot. It's simply not true that you can get the flu from the flu shot. It's also a myth that you don't need a shot every year. It's because flu strains can change annually, so the vaccine you got last fall or winter may not protect you this year. It's especially important for those who are at high risk of flu-related complications, including the elderly, young children and those with weakened immune systems.

The flu vaccine is safe, effective and free for all Ontarians over six months of age. As a physician, I strongly encourage every Ontarian to roll up their sleeves and help stop the spread of the flu this year.

### DISASTER RELIEF

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you know, on June 17 of this year, a devastating F2 tornado ripped through the township of Essa, creating a path of destruction from the village of Angus to the southwest corner of the municipality. Homes were destroyed, people were displaced and the municipality incurred substantial costs to assist residents and help with the cleanup. In fact, Mayor Terry Dowdall estimates that there was over \$10 million in damages.

Minister, you sent a letter to the municipality just recently and you turned down their application for disaster relief. Under the program, you give them zero dollars. There were over 100 homes destroyed. People were displaced. The township itself had, as you know, over \$55,000 in overtime costs. And yet no assistance; why aren't you able to provide that assistance?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a good question and it deserves a straight-up and good answer. Before I give that answer, I just want to take a moment to thank the honourable member opposite who asked the question for being with us yesterday, standing with us in Hamilton, as our community grieved the loss of a great Canadian hero. Jim, I appreciated you being there, sir.

I want to commend the people of Essa township and Angus for their response, the first responders and the municipal responders. In fact, the community's response to the events in July demonstrated just what a caring and generous set of community partners were there.

Most of the damage that was caused was covered by insurance. Most of it was covered by insurance; that was

the case in this particular instance. I can give more details in the supplemental.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Well, it's hard to give my usual supplemental with those kind comments from the minister.

I will ask you something, though, seriously, and I'll try not to be partisan about it. But it's my first time I've ever asked this in 24 years. I have an article from the Barrie Examiner that says there's no tornado relief coming and it hints that the reason we're not getting any relief, with up to \$10 million in damages, is because it's a Tory blue riding. I hope that's not the case, Minister. I trust that's not the case. I hope ministers aren't saying that privately to people. The mayor certainly has indicated in this article that that might be the case, and the author of the article indicates that. I'm going to give you an opportunity to clear that up. I hope are you not discriminating against my riding because they vote the right way.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I just want to be clear: Political pedigree has nothing to do with ODRAP decisions. There are a number of members on this side of the House and the opposite side of the House who qualified for ODRAP assistance, and when those requirements were met, that assistance was provided.

As I said in the response to the first part of the question, the vast majority was covered by insurance. Overland flooding often isn't, but tornadoes are invariably covered. The total damages from the ODRAP application that the township made were, in fact, expenses in the neighbourhood of about \$77,000. The community itself generously raised over \$140,000, so the township doesn't need the money. They don't need the money because the colleagues in their community were so generous in helping their neighbours, and we should celebrate that.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Yesterday was Meet the Miners Day at Queen's Park. You had the same briefing and attended the same reception as I did. The message was loud and clear. Industry told us that due to uncertainty, instability, uncompetitive energy prices and lack of framework, the mining sector in this province is suffering. Industry told us that when they went abroad looking for investment dollars, investors said, no, Ontario was not a good investment. When industry came to government for help, they got nothing. When First Nations asked to be included, they were excluded.

Mining companies all across this province are suffering. They are asking for stability, they are asking for competitive energy prices, they are asking for a framework in order to do business here and abroad. Will this government help the mining sector in Ontario or continue to sit on the sidelines and watch as they leave, one by one?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I regret that we won't get a supplementary question, but may I say that I think you

and I may have been at very different meetings and perhaps at a different reception. That was one of the most positive gatherings of the mining sector we've seen in a number of years at Queen's Park.

We recognize there are a number of challenges, and there is no question that the mining industry, particularly those who were there yesterday, made it clear how important certainty is. But the story is also, and a very important part of the story, that, despite those challenges—they're working with our government on a number of measures. Despite all those challenges, we are still the top jurisdiction in Canada for mineral exploration and mineral production. Despite those challenges, we had \$9.8 billion in mineral production last year.

New mines are opening up next year; new mines are opening up the year after; 10 new mines have opened up in the last 10 years. So while there are many challenges, we continue to work closely with all the mining sector but in a very positive way, moving forward on all aspects of the mining sector, including the Ring of Fire.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry on a point of order.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I just wanted to quickly—I see some residents up from eastern Ontario: Judy Wilcox, Donna Lowen and Leonna St. John here from the riding next, so welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014

##### LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'œuvre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On October 20, 2014, Mr. Flynn moved second reading of Bill 18.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Anderson, Granville  
Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert

Gravelle, Michael  
Gretzky, Lisa  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael

Milczyn, Peter Z.  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Mori, Reza



Baker, Yvan  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Ballard, Chris  
Barrett, Toby  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Campbell, Sarah  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Cimino, Joe  
Clark, Steve  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Del Duca, Steven  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dong, Han  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Fedeli, Victor  
Fife, Catherine  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Forster, Cindy  
Fraser, John  
French, Jennifer K.  
Gates, Wayne  
Gélinas, France

Hatfield, Percy  
Hillier, Randy  
Hoggarth, Ann  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hudak, Tim  
Hunter, Miltzie  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jones, Sylvia  
Kiwala, Sophie  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Marie-France  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Malhi, Harinder  
Mangat, Amrit  
Mantha, Michael  
Martins, Cristina  
Martow, Gila  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McDonnell, Jim  
McGarry, Kathryn  
McMahon, Eleanor  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNaughton, Monte  
Meilleur, Madeleine

Munro, Julia  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naidoo-Harris, Indira  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Natyshak, Taras  
Nicholls, Rick  
Orazielti, David  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Potts, Arthur  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Rinaldi, Liz  
Sandals, Lou  
Sattler, Peggy  
Scott, Laurie  
Sergio, Mario  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Sousa, Charles  
Tabuns, Peter  
Taylor, Monique  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Vanthof, John  
Vernile, Daene  
Walker, Bill  
Wilson, Jim  
Wong, Soo  
Yakabuski, John  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Campbell, Sarah  
Cimino, Joe  
Clark, Steve  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Fedeli, Victor  
Fife, Catherine  
Forster, Cindy  
French, Jennifer K.  
Gates, Wayne  
Gélinas, France  
Gretzky, Lisa

Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael  
Hatfield, Percy  
Hillier, Randy  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hudak, Tim  
Jones, Sylvia  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Mantha, Michael  
Martow, Gila  
McDonnell, Jim  
McNaughton, Monte  
Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul

Munro, Julia  
Natyshak, Taras  
Nicholls, Rick  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Sattler, Peggy  
Scott, Laurie  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Tabuns, Peter  
Taylor, Monique  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Vanthof, John  
Walker, Bill  
Wilson, Jim  
Yakabuski, John

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm supposed to say this: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes 97; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 28, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 15.

Call in the members.

On October 28, Mr. Bradley moved government notice of motion number 6.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Anderson, Granville  
Baker, Yvan  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Ballard, Chris  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Del Duca, Steven  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Dong, Han  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Fraser, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoggarth, Ann  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hunter, Miltzie  
Jaczek, Helena  
Kiwala, Sophie  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Marie-France  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
Malhi, Harinder  
Mangat, Amrit  
Martins, Cristina  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McGarry, Kathryn  
McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milczyn, Peter Z.  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naidoo-Harris, Indira  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Orazielti, David  
Potts, Arthur  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Sousa, Charles  
Vernile, Daene  
Wong, Soo  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 53; the nays are 44.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1155 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Good afternoon. It is my great pleasure to introduce to the House today, in the members' west gallery, Ashley De Souza, who is the director of government relations for ORBA, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, as well as my sister, Mary-Sue Gardonio, who is here as well with ORBA. She's the chair of the Ontario Road Builders' Association. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park today.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** It's my great pleasure to introduce members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission who are visiting in the Legislature today: Justice Murray Sinclair, Commissioner Marie Wilson and Ms. Kim Murray, who is the executive director.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome. We're glad they're here.

Further introduction of guests? It is now time for members' statements.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY RIGHTS CONFERENCE

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** I recently attended the International Property Rights Conference in Ottawa on October 4. This property rights conference was the first International Property Rights Conference and it was hosted by the Ontario Landowners Association.

Len Harris, a former senator from Australia; Ron Gibson from Oregon, an expert in letters patent and US constitutional law; Tom DeWeese from Virginia, founder and president of the American Policy Center; and Elizabeth Marshall, head of research for the Ontario Landowners Association and an expert on letters patent and other Canadian constitutional documents were the guest speakers.

The conference was packed with 200 people and included several Progressive Conservative MPPs and a city of Ottawa councillor. The presentations included invaluable information on the destruction of private property rights around the world and the sharing of available common-law tools with which to fight back.

That same evening, interested landowners convened and formed the International Property Rights Association. They decided that the time had come to establish a global network to defend against a worldwide attack on private property rights.

Tom Black, president of the Ontario Landowners Association, was elected as chair of the new association. The mission statement of the International Property Rights Association is "To preserve and protect inviolable rights, property, land and security, under common law."

#### MUSLIM RESOURCE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I rise today on behalf of the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration, established in 2009 to provide a support network for London's diverse Muslim community. The centre engages local Muslim and Arab leaders as well as social service and justice agencies in dealing with complex issues related to integration, family conflict, domestic violence and children in conflict with the law.

Yesterday, the centre hosted a provincial conference called Culturally Integrative Family Safety Response in Child Welfare. The conference showcased the successful model developed by the centre in collaboration with the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex to reduce the risk of family violence. Between 2009 and 2012, this model led to a 73% decrease in the number of Muslim and/or Arab children entering the child welfare system. With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the model has been transferred to Ottawa, Kingston and York region.

In the wake of the violence on Parliament Hill, many commentators have called for just such culturally responsive services to identify Muslims in crisis and connect them to professional supports. Yet the Muslim Resource Centre remains underfunded, its operations dependent on a patchwork of project-based funds.

We all need to work together to protect community safety. Ensuring a culturally responsive social safety net through sustainable funding for agencies like the Muslim Resource Centre is a critical part of those efforts.

#### McCORMICK CUP

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** An epic battle between Toronto's two top rugby clubs, Balmy Beach and Toronto Scottish, occurred last Saturday for Ontario men's rugby's oldest and most sought-after prize, the McCormick Cup. Held at Fletcher's Fields in Markham, this contest is a long-standing tradition in Ontario rugby. I must confess to a small conflict, since my daughter Robin has played for the Scottish, whereas the Beachers are in my riding. But now that I have joined the Balmy Beach Club, I guess we'll be cheering for different teams.

The McCormick Cup is a prize for Rugby Ontario's Marshall Premiership league for the first teams, and it allows the winner to boast that they're the best rugby team in Ontario. The cup is named for former Rugby Ontario president Vic McCormick, one of the great builders of the sport in our province.

The McCormick Cup has been won 13 times by Balmy Beach, and last Saturday they beat Scottish decisively 27-22, hoisting it for the 14th time. But that's not all. Two top cups were won that day: The Gee Gage Cup, the trophy for the seconds, was also won by Balmy Beach, a decisive victory of 38-25, again over the Scottish.

The Beachers' head coach, Bruce Gage, was the son of Tubs and Gee, who their local field is named after. They worked very hard to make rugby what it is in Ontario today.

The double victory has never happened before. It's a true testament to the depth of the club. A hard-fought battle—great job, boys. Up the beach!

#### ABOLISHMENT OF SLAVERY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** There are many notable milestone anniversaries this year: The 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, and the 70th anniversary of D-Day, the beginning of the Battle of Normandy and the liberation of Europe are two that come to mind. But there's another significant milestone anniversary this year that has passed largely unnoticed. In the summer of 1834, 180 years ago this year, slavery was abolished in the British colonies by an act of Parliament of the United Kingdom, and so abolished in Canada.

For more than 20 years, in a remarkable display of parliamentary perseverance, William Wilberforce introduced bill after bill in the House of Commons to end the scourge of slavery in the British empire. His goal was finally realized in 1833, with the passage of the Slavery Abolition Act. Sadly, Wilberforce died one month later, not living to see his bill come into force on August 1, 1834.

Today, August 1 is recognized in Ontario as Emancipation Day, the day when slavery here was abolished for all time, turning Ontario into an important destination of the Underground Railroad for slaves who had escaped the US south.

Bill 111, the Emancipation Day Act, 2008, was the very first private member's bill introduced in the history



of this House that was co-sponsored by two MPPs from different parties, showing that we can work together across party lines to get things done and recognize with pride an important part of Ontario's heritage and history.

### HALLOWEEN

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Halloween is just a few days away. The kids are excited, and let's be honest: Many parents are looking forward to raiding the stash their kids will bring home as they sleep.

During the Halloween season, it is important to keep your child's safety in mind when planning costumes, decorations, treats and activities. Make sure that Halloween is a safe and happy experience for the whole family by preparing ahead of time. It is important to make your home safe for the little ghouls and goblins. Remove objects around the outside of your house that could cause children to trip or fall. Turn on your outdoor lights to increase visibility and let the trick-or-treaters know they can visit.

Ensure that your children are dressed appropriately for Halloween. Pick brightly coloured costumes. Avoid costumes that are too big. Choose costumes that fit well and can be worn over warm clothes so that children are protected against the cold and wet weather.

Keep your children safe by teaching them to stay visible and be aware of their surroundings at all times. Teach your children to be careful when crossing the street. Always examine the treats and toys that are brought home before giving them to your child.

With all that in mind, Mr. Speaker, enjoy a spook-tacular and safe Halloween.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Boo.

1510

### REPUBLIC DAY OF TURKEY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Today Ontario joins with Turkish people around the world to celebrate the 91st anniversary of the proclamation of the Turkish republic. On October 29, 1923, Mustafa Kemal, also known as Kemal Atatürk—"Father of the Turks"—later elected as the first president of the Republic of Turkey, declared that Turkey would become a republic.

Turkey today has the world's 16th-largest economy, a population of some 80 million and a growing, healthy free market. It has a strong infrastructure fabric, and Turkey is more resilient to the peaks and valleys of the global economy as a result. The Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations hosted a flag-raising today just outside the Legislature. The federation was established in 1985 and is a non-profit organization promoting cultural, economic, educational, social and religious issues important to the Turkish community in Canada.

It was my honour today to join with my colleagues, including Minister Moridi, to welcome the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations, to welcome the Consul General of Turkey, Mr. Ali Rıza Güney, and to join with

Turkish people across Ontario who have come together to celebrate this joyous day.

On behalf of Ontario, I welcome you this evening to celebrate Republic Day of Turkey at Hart House from 6 to 8 p.m.

### LAURA COUGHLIN

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Today I would like to recognize a woman from Waterloo region who devoted her life to helping others: Laura Coughlin. I have been told great things by people within our community about Laura, as well as by her son, Patrick Nelson, who is a friend of many of us in this Legislature.

In Waterloo region, Laura spent the last 30 years working to improve the lives of children with mental health, mood disorder and developmental challenges. Recognizing the gap that exists for families who have children with a mental illness or disability, Laura assisted in strengthening Parents for Children's Mental Health, Waterloo, and founded the Mood Disorder Parent Support Group in Waterloo region. She volunteered for KidsAbility, Waterloo, which is a rehabilitation facility for children with special needs. These are all foundational programs within our community that bring great support to families. More recently, she participated in the Grand River Hospital Foundation campaign to raise awareness of children's mental health.

In amongst all her volunteering, she still found time to provide foster care for almost 40 children and teenagers. Laura's selflessness and dedication are an example for all of us to live by.

On Thursday, October 23, she lost her battle with ALS. It is with great sadness that she leaves us. On behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I want to thank her for the contributions she has made to this province and the legacy she leaves behind in our region of Waterloo.

### DARLINGTON FUSION

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** I rise today to recognize an outstanding achievement by a team of soccer players in my riding of Durham. I am pleased today to tell you about the Darlington Fusion under-16 girls' soccer team, which, over the Thanksgiving weekend, travelled to Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, for the national soccer championships.

They didn't face an easy road to victory in the tournament. Though they earned shutouts in the first two games of the tournament, the team was forced to go to penalty kicks in both quarter- and semi-final games before finally beating Manitoba in what I hear was an extremely well-played game. The team won the provincials, played in Oshawa, to qualify for the national championships.

This group of talented young women have been able to over the past few years by head coach Dave Staley. Darlington Fusion is part of the Darlington Soccer Club, which has been part of my community for more than 130 years.

My very warmest congratulations to this group of very talented young women and their coaches.

### KITCHENER CITY COUNCIL

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** October 27 was a momentous day for municipalities across Ontario, and Kitchener was no exception. I'm delighted to tell you and the House about our new council and our new mayor in the great city of Kitchener, as well as to thank our outgoing long-time mayor, Carl Zehr.

After serving six consecutive terms as a councillor for ward 2, Berry Vrbancovic was elected as our new mayor in Kitchener, with a healthy majority of votes. I have personally known Berry for more than 25 years, and I can attest to the fact that he is a very hard-working, generous and committed public servant. Berry will no doubt be a great asset to the city of Kitchener.

With the happy welcoming of Mayor-elect Vrbancovic, it is also with a very heavy heart that we say farewell to our outgoing mayor, Carl Zehr, who was first elected to Kitchener council, where he served from 1985 to 1994. He went on to become our mayor in the city in 1997, making him Kitchener's longest-serving mayor ever. Carl has been a wonderful advocate for our city, and I sincerely thank him for his years of commitment and devotion to our community.

I would also like to welcome Dave Schneider and Sarah Marsh as new members of Kitchener city council and congratulate all the returning members, and I want to give a nod to all the candidates who put their names on the ballot in the K-W area.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements, and I do have an announcement. In the members' galleries, east and west, there are the red shoelaces that I promised after the first statement, returning to the House, that the Special Olympics were being held in North Bay. The member from Nipissing announced that. Those shoelaces are in the members' galleries—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sorry, the lobbies, not the members' galleries. They're yours to help advertise Special Olympics Ontario. So I thank you for that, and I thank the member from Nipissing for having that available.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 111(b).

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Barrett presents the committee's report.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'll leave that as presented.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 111(b), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### SAINT PAUL UNIVERSITY ACT, 2014

Mr. Fraser moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr8, An Act respecting Saint Paul University.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### EBOLA VIRUS

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to outline the actions that our government has taken to prepare for and respond to Ebola virus disease.

Many Ontarians know that, in addition to being Minister of Health, I am also a medical doctor and a public health specialist. I'm also a former aid worker with many years of experience working in the area of infectious disease in Africa, including in West Africa, and these experiences have given me, I believe, a unique and useful perspective when we are looking at the measures to be taken to protect ourselves and confront the Ebola epidemic that's currently affecting West Africa.

1520

Mr. Speaker, the current outbreak of Ebola in West Africa is indeed unprecedented. The World Health Organization estimates that without more help from the international community, by this December there could be as many as 10,000 new infections occurring each and every week.

I'm proud to say that Ontario is supporting the international emergency response by donating \$3 million to support the efforts of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières in their efforts to fight Ebola in West Africa. In fact, much of that money will go towards our Ontario and Canadian health care experts and aid workers who have and will be travelling to the region of West Africa to confront this horrible epidemic.

Mr. Speaker, with globalization and the movement of people across continents, we can't rule out that Ontario could eventually be faced with its first case of Ebola. While the risk to Ontarians remains very, very low, the



preparedness of our health care system and the protection of our health care workers is a top priority for my ministry and for me.

Fortunately, the province is in a much better position today to respond to a disease like Ebola because of our experience with SARS a decade ago. Among other improvements, we now have a much more robust public health system. We expanded infection control resources and expertise to help hospitals control disease outbreaks, and we now have Public Health Ontario to provide scientific and technical support for infection prevention and control, disease surveillance, epidemiology and emergency preparedness.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important to me that we take action to protect Ontarians and our front-line health care workers—our first line of defence. That's why I recently announced the additional measures that our government is taking to protect Ontarians and, in particular, our health care workers.

My ministry, in collaboration with Public Health Ontario, has worked for many months with Ontario health care providers, health and safety experts, and infectious disease specialists to provide guidelines regarding disease diagnosis; specimen collection; infection prevention and control measures, and testing. Since then, at my request, the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Mowat, has issued a directive to all acute-care settings—our hospitals—concerning the procedures that are necessary to protect the health of workers and significantly reduce the risk of spreading the disease. This directive also requires that at all times, two registered nurses provide care to each patient confirmed to have Ebola, and that they must not care for any other patients. In addition, management staff must be designated to supervise the safety of our health care workers.

We're enhancing the province's readiness strategy in six key ways.

First, my ministry has designated 11 hospitals across Ontario to serve as referral centres—designated hospitals for the treatment of any Ebola cases. Those hospitals are the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Hamilton Health Sciences, Health Sciences North, the Hospital for Sick Children, Kingston General Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, the Ottawa Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital, Sunnybrook Hospital and University Health Network's Toronto Western Hospital. These hospitals have very sophisticated infection control systems and procedures already in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection to protect health care workers and to provide the best possible care for patients.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, my ministry is working with Ornge and other emergency medical services to designate and equip ambulances to transport potential Ebola patients to the designated hospitals for treatment. The first responders on these ambulances would wear biohazard suits and transport patients in an isolation pod to protect themselves.

Third, as of October 20, the Ontario public health laboratory now has the capability to test potential Ebola

cases. This has provided Ontario with local capacity that will make test results available even sooner. Specimens will also be sent to the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg for confirmation.

Fourth, my ministry has created a formal Minister's Advisory Table on Ebola Preparedness to ensure that the needs of health care workers are addressed effectively and as quickly as possible. It brings together key stakeholders and partners, including front-line health care workers and their representatives, to provide input and advice to inform the ministry's decisions as we continue to ensure Ontario's preparedness, and that first meeting has already taken place last week.

Fifth, my ministry created an Ebola Command Table, which includes myself; the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Mowat; the Deputy Minister of Health; Public Health Ontario; our partner ministries; and representatives from the province's LHINs and designated referral hospitals. Our first meeting also took place last week.

Finally, the province is enhancing the availability of, and its readiness to distribute, biohazard suits to further protect health care workers who treat Ebola patients. This is in addition to personal protection equipment that is already stockpiled by hospitals, and includes additional precautionary protection, such as face shields, hoods and boots.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to gather information about this situation, as it becomes available through the Public Health Agency of Canada and other international and national sources, in order to continue to monitor and assess the risk to the people of Ontario. And we will keep updating our readiness strategies in response to any changes in the current disease situation.

I want to assure all Ontarians that their safety is my top priority, and I'm confident that with the measures now in place, Ontario is well prepared to contain and treat any potential case of Ebola in our province.

## PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** This month marks the 100th anniversary of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, or what we know as WSIB. A hundred years ago, on October 1, 1914, what was then known as the Workmen's Compensation Board held its first board meeting to begin providing workplace compensation to Ontarians.

It was a time of great change that same year. Our country was sending its first convoy of troops across the Atlantic in the First World War. The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto had opened its doors to the public for the very first time. And Ontario judge Sir William Meredith had just provided the Lieutenant Governor a report on compensating workers who had been injured on the job.

The report outlined a very historic compromise. It laid out certain key principles for a workers' compensation system, which included no-fault compensation, security

of benefits through the establishment of a fund, collective liability of employers and administration by an independent agency. These principles led to the creation of what is now known as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and those principles ring true today, just as they did 100 years ago. And they're going to continue to ring true for the next 100 years and beyond, as the WSIB adapts to changing needs of the workforce in Ontario.

Speaker, our government continues to be committed to those founding principles of the WSIB, because we believe that a strong and fair WSIB is absolutely crucial to Ontario's workers, employers and economy. The injured workers of this province must be treated with fairness, with dignity and with respect, because even in a land of abundance, our workers, the people of Ontario, are the most important resource we have. We must do our utmost to protect that resource and those people.

The WSIB has provided injured and ill workers compensation benefits, access to health care and ongoing support so workers can transition safely back into their job.

I know the WSIB is committed to creating a financially sustainable system that's going to continue to help Ontario workers well into the next century or beyond. So in that regard, Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the chair, Elizabeth Witmer, and the board. I'd also like to thank the WSIB executive and staff for their ongoing hard work

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This month, we also observe another important milestone. This month marks the 35th anniversary of Ontario's landmark workplace health and safety legislation, what we know today as the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This piece of legislation in Ontario forever changed the way that workplaces address health and safety. It gave workers in this province three very distinct rights: They now have the right to refuse unsafe work, the right to know about hazards in the workplace, and the right to participate in identifying and resolving health and safety concerns.

Since 2003, we've significantly lowered the rate of injury in the province of Ontario. Our province is among the safest places to work in all of Canada. But as long as we have mothers and fathers and sons and daughters who fail to come home at night because of a workplace injury or fatality, we have so much more to do. That's why our government has embarked on the greatest revitalization of Ontario's workplace health and safety system in more than 30 years. One of the most significant changes came into effect this year on July 1. It's a regulation that requires employers to ensure that workers and supervisors complete basic occupational health and safety training awareness programs in their workplace. We're the very first province in the country to introduce such mandatory health and safety training, and we believe it's going to give workers all across this province the basic tools they need to do their job safely.

As we move forward from these important anniversaries, we will continue to focus on the areas of greatest

need—vulnerable workers, small businesses and high-hazard workplaces—because at the end of the day, we all have to work together to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. We all share in that important responsibility. So on this occasion, as we commemorate how the WSIB has served Ontarians and we look forward to the next 100 years, let us also at the same time strengthen our resolve to eliminate workplace injuries. Let us remind ourselves that even one workplace injury is simply too much. Let us continue working together to realize the vision that we all have for healthier, safer and fairer workplaces in Ontario. That's a future we want all our children to see and that all workers in this province deserve. That's the Ontario that we want to build.

#### CHILD CARE WORKERS

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to stand in this House today in support of the 14th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. Today we recognize the people who devote themselves to caring for our youngest and dearest every day. These early years professionals are passionate, committed and hard-working. They are skilled, knowledgeable and resourceful, and they're vital to our world-class education system. They are giving children the tools they need to learn, grow and feel valued. Above all, they are giving our children a valuable head start.

These early years professionals and registered early childhood educators are also providing parents and families with much-needed peace of mind. Parents are confident that when they leave home each morning, their children are being left in caring and capable hands.

I can tell you that there is amazing work being done each and every day across this great province. In fact, it's worth noting that in many ways, these early years professionals are a child's very first teacher outside of the home. Long before children enter school and full-day kindergarten, early years professionals and early childhood educators are providing valuable guidance, support and encouragement. As professionals, they know that children are born to learn and are rich in potential. They also know that by recognizing a child's individual strengths and abilities, they can help their young minds to flourish. That's why these early learning professionals work closely with parents and families to support a child's growth and development. They give them the confidence and trust to enter the school system and succeed.

It goes without saying that a child's first day in the care of our early learning professionals is a momentous occasion. It marks an important new beginning in a journey that will culminate in the pursuit of their lifelong dreams. And right from the start, Ontario's early years professionals and early childhood educators will be there with a helping hand.

We know the importance of the formative years in creating a solid foundation for a child's entire life. That's why in Ontario we offer an array of programs and



services for children and families. Early years professionals provide exemplary service in child care centres, licensed private home child care settings, full-day kindergarten classrooms, family resource programs, before- and after-school programs, and much more. But whatever the setting, early years professionals are doing amazing work.

I don't just say this as Minister of Education; I say this as a mother, a grandma and a former trustee. I've seen first-hand the great work of Ontario's early years professionals and early childhood educators. These are the champions of our youngest and most precious Ontarians. They do what they do because they want to make a real difference, and they want to change young lives for the better.

All our children have the right to a brighter future, and all children deserve the best possible start in life. Therefore, I urge everyone in this House today to join in support of these dedicated professionals: all of the early years staff and early childhood educators across our great province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is now time for responses.

### EBOLA VIRUS

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the PC caucus—particularly on behalf of the member from Whitby, Christine Elliott, our health critic—in response to the statement by the Minister of Health concerning Ontario's new Ebola guidelines.

While it appears that Ontario is working to bring in strong measures, perhaps some of the most stringent in Canada, it is still disconcerting that the ministry wasn't as initially proactive as it ought to have been in preparing our front-line health workers, primary care providers, walk-in clinics and doctor's offices in responding to Ebola.

It's disconcerting precisely because our province has been through two pandemics in the last decade: SARS and H1N1. In his report to the government, Justice Campbell of the SARS commission warned that we all failed ourselves and should all be ashamed "because we did not insist that these governments protect us better." As such, I question why, just 10 years later, the same workers—namely, the nurses—felt that this government wasn't ramping up their training in protective equipment and protocols as rapidly as it should have been.

Likewise, hospital administrators have shared that they remain unclear as to the reimbursement plan for the new guidelines, as their budgets are being further strained due to the costs of mandatory supplies, personal protective equipment and training. The MOH has yet to identify a reimbursement plan for hospitals, beyond "We will reimburse you at a later date." Surely we don't want this lack of a reimbursement plan to impact hospitals' existing services and, most importantly, patient care.

Today's Ebola scare is a true test of our province's readiness for such an outbreak and our ability to take a

proactive approach to ensure that health workers and patients are protected. I want to thank the health care professionals for being proactive, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and his staff, as well as the health minister and his staff for their efforts in working to address these concerns, and their collective efforts in keeping Ontario families safe during the Ebola threat.

### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Today we are recognizing the 35th anniversary of the Ontario health and safety act, and the 100th anniversary of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Both of these are government initiatives: one a piece of legislation, and the other an agency with a long-standing history in Ontario.

The Ontario health and safety act has helped provide protection to keep workers across Ontario safe in the workplace, and if they do happen to get hurt, injured or ill, the WSIB, in all its variants throughout history, has been there to provide a helping hand back up.

While both should unquestionably be applauded for the work they do across this province to take care of workers, there is certainly much room for improvement. The WSIB has struggled for many years to properly manage a balance between premiums, benefits, unfunded liability and timely, efficient services and decisions.

All of us in this House ought to recognize that we cannot truly protect injured workers if the institution in place to take care of them fails to manage their responsibilities properly. So as we recognize these two anniversaries in this House, let us all remember it is our responsibility to ensure that both are managed and administered in a responsible and accountable manner.

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### CHILD CARE WORKERS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased today to respond to the Minister of Education on the 14th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. I, too, agree about the great work they do across our province.

For many years now, my own children—we had a co-operative program we set up right in this small community and hired one of our first early childhood educators many years ago.

But I really want to point out today that, although it's appreciation day for most of them in Ontario, I think one of the things the minister didn't touch on was Bill 10. Bill 10 has a very, very negative impact on daycare in the province of Ontario.

We brought this up in debate. We know right now that the government is trying to push this bill through, and they'd like to see it all passed by Christmastime, in spite of the fact that only 35 recommendations by the Ombudsman have been implemented on this very, very important file.

I know that many of the private daycare operators across this province are early childhood educators. They're very professional in the manner in which they operate their businesses and look after our most precious commodity: our children.

I'm asking the minister once again—and we will continue to push for this in this House, because I want this particular Bill 10 to travel in the winter recess. We can have this thing all cleaned up by the time we get back here on Family Day, with the proper amendments put in place.

I think it's disgraceful that we practise early childhood education day at a time when the government is trying to push a bill through that has a very, very negative impact on 140,000 daycare spaces in the province of Ontario.

### EBOLA VIRUS

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I want to begin by thanking all of the front-line health care professionals across Ontario who are working so hard to prepare for any potential cases of Ebola. We've been lucky that none of the suspected cases have tested positive. But infection control cannot be based on good luck. It must be proactive, not reactive. It must be based on the best evidence, not the best-case scenario. It must protect everyone who could find themselves at risk.

Our health care workers are on the front lines. When a suspected case of Ebola is found, they go to the bedside of that patient. They need to have every confidence that the government has left nothing to chance.

But we've heard from nurses who said they felt unprepared. We've heard from ambulance services that weren't ready and whose first responders did not feel safe.

We're concerned that due to the three-month wait for OHIP coverage, new Canadians may not have immediate access to health services when experiencing symptoms.

Speaker, it shouldn't take press conferences and failed inspections for the government to get this right. We shouldn't be playing catch-up today, but that's what the government is doing. Primary care workers are still waiting for directives so that they can prepare for Ebola, and the government is scrambling to order enough protective gear, while borrowing from the feds. We must do better.

As NDP critic for community safety, I urge the government to waste no more time in ensuring all front-line Ontario health workers are ready for the challenge they may face. We owe it to our nurses, doctors, first responders, cleaners—the list goes on—to ensure that they have the right equipment and the right training to keep Ontarians safe in all of our communities.

### PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It is my honour to rise today on behalf of Ontario New Democrats to commemorate two important milestones for workers in the province. It has

been 100 years since meaningful workers' compensation laws were first passed in Ontario. This year also marks the 35th anniversary of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Also, I'll mention that it is the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers' 25th anniversary this year.

In 1910, Sir William Meredith was appointed to review the system of adjudicating injured workers' claims in Ontario and to provide a report back to this House. That report served as the foundation of the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1914.

Meredith's work provided the template for the key pillars which are widely referred to even today as simply the Meredith principles: security of payment, a no-fault system, collective liability, and administration by an independent agency. It is indeed our duty in this Legislature to continue to ensure that these principles are adhered to in both the spirit and letter of the law.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the hard work of people like former Ontario Federation of Labour president Gord Wilson and Leo Gerard, from the United Steelworkers, for their advocacy in establishing OHCOW clinics across Ontario to provide service, education and clinical expertise from a worker's perspective, and in making this service available free of charge to all workers in Ontario.

On this historic occasion, Speaker, let every member of this House commit to honouring and protecting those critical elements to a fair and just system of compensation for injured workers, and to properly funding our health and safety associations.

### CHILD CARE WORKERS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's a privilege to recognize the 14th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. Every day in our province, moms and dads depend on the work of early childhood professionals. In all of our communities, kids are able to learn and discover because of the dedicated work of over 42,000 staff, including 17,000 registered early childhood educators. It really is the most important job we could ask anyone to do.

But these vital workers just don't get the support they deserve. The median wage for early childhood educators in licensed daycare is just over \$16 an hour. Other child care workers are paid even less.

Full-day kindergarten classrooms are overflowing. Over 600 rooms were crowded with more than 30 children last year, and I've talked to parents this year also dealing with substantial overcrowding in all-day kindergarten classrooms.

The government will say they've recognized these challenges, and New Democrats certainly support a long-overdue wage enhancement for these vital workers. But the fact is the Liberals continue to drag their heels when it comes to investing in a truly seamless, licensed, not-for-profit child care and early education system that serves all the children of this province. There remains



only one licensed daycare spot for every five children in this province, forcing far too many families to turn to unlicensed care.

Child care and early education need to be a priority for Ontario.

## PETITIONS

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support it, will affix my signature and give it to page Jamie.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

"Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

"Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

"Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding."

I fully concur with this petition. I will be affixing my signature, and I will give it to page Ben.

### HOSPICE FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is a discrepancy between how hospices are funded in Ontario; and

"Whereas Matthews House Hospice is the lowest-funded hospice in the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and among the lowest-funded in the province, even though it serves as many clients or more than other hospices that receive greater provincial support; and

"Whereas Matthews House has been told by the Central LHIN that LHINs do not fund residential hospice operational costs and yet hospices in other LHINs, including Barrie, Huntsville, Richmond Hill, Owen Sound and now Collingwood, all receive operational funding from the province; and

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"Whereas in February 2010 Matthews House Hospice was promised a solution to its underfunding by the Central LHIN which has never materialized;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Wynne government immediately develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with hospice funding to ensure that people in south Simcoe and all Ontarians receive equal access to end-of-life care."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the petition and I'll sign it.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** "Whereas the Auditor General of Ontario defines the global adjustment charge on hydro bills as 'mostly consisting of the difference between the market price and the price paid to generators as set by the board for OPG or under contract with the government or the OPA'; and

"Whereas the Auditor General says the global adjustment has been rising steadily over the last few years and is expected to continue to rise from \$700 million (prior to the 2009 passage of the Green Energy Act) to \$8.1 billion by 2014; and

"Whereas the Liberal government's 2010 fall economic statement stated that hydro bills are expected to rise 46% by 2015, and that new renewable power generation would account for 56% of that increase; and

"Whereas small to mid-sized businesses across Ontario are seeing the global adjustment portion of their monthly hydro bills increase significantly to the point that it is now larger than the actual energy portion of their bills; and

"Whereas many of those businesses are now delaying investment or hiring, or both, and considering either closing or moving outside of the province of Ontario as a result of delivered-to-market industrial energy rates that are now the highest in North America;

"We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the government of Ontario to reverse course on its expensive energy policy by cancelling the feed-in tariff ... subsidies and treating Ontario's energy as an economic development tool so that it once again is a competitive advantage for Ontario in retaining and attracting jobs and investment."

I agree with this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to page Morgan.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

This is signed by dozens of my constituents, and I'll affix my signature as well.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I agree with this petition and I'll sign my name to it.

#### CORNWALL OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many people use this 200 acres to walk their dogs on the scenic trails around the quarry. The MNR has stocked the quarry with trout every year for at least 40 years. The quarry is also great for bass fishing. This provides year-round enjoyment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Reopen the Cornwall recreation area trout quarry."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Jamie.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;



"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I support this petition, affix my signature to it, and hand it to page Faith.

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition.

### DIABETES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government implemented cuts to the Ontario health insurance program such that Ontario residents suffering from diabetes saw their annual eligibility for blood sugar test strips reduced to 200 per year, less than one a day; and

"Whereas a blood sugar test strip costs approximately 70 cents; and

"Whereas this latest cut to services to Ontario patients is just another misguided measure to nickel-and-dime Ontarians; and

"Whereas a focus on preventing disease and hospitalization is in the long-term interest of patients, their families and the province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate full and unlimited eligibility for blood sugar test strips covered by OHIP for all Ontario residents suffering from diabetes."

I agree with this and will be passing it on to Meher.

1600

### OPPOSITION DAY

#### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls upon the government to recognize that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy has been investigating the destruction of documents regarding the cancellation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants during the 2011 election. Further, that the committee has not fully completed its investigation, and that the two essential witnesses of the investigation who were named in the Ontario Provincial Police's information to obtain, Peter Faist and Laura Miller, who were originally scheduled to appear at committee before the June election, have not yet testified.

Therefore, in order to complete the original mandate of the committee, it is the opinion of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy is able to fulfill its mandate by requiring both Peter Faist and Laura Miller to testify to the committee before report writing commences.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved opposition day number 1. I recognize the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm going to give a little bit by way of history. Several years ago—and first of all, I want to say that it's a sad thing that we're doing here today. It's sad that it has come to this point. It is sad that we require an opposition day motion in the Legislature as our last hope, even though the hope is faint—it's the faint hope clause, as they say—because we know that now, with the majority, the Liberals are going to do their best to muster their members here into the House sometime

before 6 o'clock and defeat this motion. Unfortunately, that's likely to be the case.

However, I'm going to hope that some of those new members who were elected in June, who have probably not drunk enough of the Kool-Aid yet, might have a moment of conscience and ask themselves, "Do we just want to do what the rest of them have been doing since 2003, act like a bunch of trained seals and do what the Premier's office tells us? Or are we going to think independently and do what our constituents have asked us to do, and that is the right thing"—to do what is right and give the people of Ontario the opportunity to hear from two key witnesses in this investigation, Laura Miller and Peter Faist.

Let's go back in time a little bit, Speaker. Several years ago, the government decided that they needed power badly in the area of the western GTA, specifically Oakville and Mississauga. They put out RFPs and they went through all kinds of processes. My God, there was all kinds of opposition to these power plants. I remember being in Oakville several times. The people didn't want the power plants there, but the government decided, "We're building the power plants"—near the Ford area in Oakville and in Mississauga, one that was actually under construction when they cancelled it. The people didn't want the plants there, but the government said, "We're building them anyway."

Then, after they made those decisions, political reality for them kicked in and they thought, "Oh, my goodness gracious, we're getting a lot of opposition to these plants. For starters, we're going to have to save Kevin Flynn's seat in Oakville." So about a year before the election, five years or more after the decision was first made to build the plant there, magically, somehow the power wasn't needed in Oakville anymore. That was their story, the excuse: The power wasn't needed in Oakville anymore.

Interestingly enough, after beginning construction—in fact, there was millions of dollars of construction. We've all seen the pictures of the gas plant in Mississauga getting bigger every day. Then all of a sudden, during the 2011 election, they were worried about the members in Mississauga, like the member from Mississauga—Streetsville—I won't say his name because he'll rise on a point of order within about three seconds. Him and his colleagues from Mississauga, like the finance minister, Mississauga South, and other ones—Etobicoke—Lake-shore, Etobicoke Centre—were all concerned; some Etobicoke candidates as well as Mississauga. They were all concerned about losing their seats in the 2011 election. And, oh, it got even better in Oakville.

At the eleventh hour, just a few days before the election, Dalton McGuinty, who was the Premier then—you remember Dalton McGuinty? Hard to forget—announces that, "We're not going to go ahead with the building of the Mississauga plant." This is a plant that they were already building. They had already started to build it, and then they cancelled it because again, magically, we didn't really need the power. We needed it

two months before when we started building it—or three months; whatever—but now we didn't need it. It was the seat-saver program where they were willing to throw all logic out the window and cancel plants.

Then the story begins. "Okay, folks, we've got to come up with a real doozer here because this thing is going to cost us a bucketful of money. So let's get our stories straight and make sure that whatever emails we're doing we look at them maybe and we're going to have to delete some of those maybe later, but we've got to get our stories straight because we've got a real story to tell the people, because how are we going to justify this to the public, this decision to cancel these plants?"

They got it all wrapped up together and cancelled the plants. Then they announced, "Oakville: We're going to build that plant up near Napanee, hundreds of miles away, and it's not going to cost a lot of money. Mississauga, we're going to move to Sarnia and it's going to cost \$40 million." That was the story and they were sticking to it. Then, surprise, surprise. Do you remember Jim McCarter, the past Auditor General? Jim McCarter says, "I'd better take a look at this."

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** It smells.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** "Something really doesn't smell very good here." That \$40 million turned into over \$200 million. Okay, 40 and 200; keep those numbers in mind. Then the Oakville plant turned into about an \$800-million fiasco. They're moving it up to the Napanee and Bath area near Kingston, and what are they going to do? They have to actually build power lines to bring the power back to Oakville. "We can't build in Oakville because we don't need the power in Oakville, but let's build in Napanee because we need the power in Oakville and we'll build all nice power lines to bring that power back to Oakville."

"Oh, but you know what else we've got to do? Oh, we forgot. We've got to build more gas lines to bring gas to the plant in Napanee." Millions and millions turned into a billion—\$1.1 billion. We can't get that money back. It's all contracted out. It's gone for the next 20 years. You'll be paying for that on your hydro bills.

The expectation was that we have to get to the bottom of this. We have to find out what went wrong. So the justice committee begins its work, and as we're interviewing witnesses—and we had lots of witnesses. We're going to hear that from the government: "You had 70 witnesses and hundreds of thousands of pages of documents, and this and that. We want to end the investigation."

We did interview all kinds of people, and some very good information came from that, and some very good information from the documents that we were able to look at. But, you see, a lot of those documents we didn't get to see because there was some little gremlin in the Premier's office who was deleting emails, and all kinds of people in the minister's office were deleting emails. So we're never going to get to see them. But then the OPP got involved too. They turned this into a criminal investigation. Do you understand that? A criminal



investigation. When I hear the words “criminal investigation,” I hear the sound of jail doors slamming and people being incarcerated. Because they must have done something wrong, somebody must have done something wrong, or at least there’s the belief on the part of the OPP—and I hear so many times from the government about how much they respect the work of the OPP. Well, the OPP decided that, “We believe there’s some criminal wrongdoing here.” So they released a statement called an information to obtain. This is where we get to the crux of the matter.

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The information to obtain was where we found out about—we had spoken to Laura Miller earlier, and we weren’t able to pick up on everything. But when the OPP released their information to obtain, all of a sudden, Laura Miller’s complexion changed. We saw her in a different light. This girl, this lady, this woman was key to this criminal investigation. And then we found out she had a boyfriend, a fellow by the name of Peter Faist. But the problem was, Peter Faist seemed to know all about computers. And he was in and out of these offices like a mouse in the fall getting ready to move into your house for the winter. He was in, he was out, he was in, he was out. And every time he would come in, more emails would disappear. Every time he would come in, more documents were deleted. And you know what the funny thing about it is? Peter Faist didn’t even work for the government. Yet, somehow, he was getting inside these top-secret offices. He was just weaving his way in there. Who was letting him in? We’d like to know these things. The people of Ontario would like to know these things.

So what we did, our folks here—my colleague Lisa MacLeod from Nepean-Carleton; my colleague Vic Fedeli from Nipissing; myself; my former colleague from Cambridge, Rob Leone; Lisa Thompson, my colleague from Huron-Bruce—we were all part of this committee. And we thought, “My God, we might be on to something.” So with the help from our friends the New Democrats, we decided we were going to go after Laura Miller and Peter Faist and get them to testify at this committee. They agreed they would testify, and as they were scheduled to testify, Premier Wynne called an election. She went to the Lieutenant Governor and called an election. She got a little bit of a threat from Andrea Horwath in the morning that said that we weren’t going to support the budget, and right away, she ran as quick as she could to the Lieutenant Governor and called an election. She said, “My goodness, this is one sure way we won’t ever hear from Laura Miller and Peter Faist, right? All we have to do is hornswoggle the people of Ontario into getting us a majority and we’ll never hear about this again.”

Well, that’s exactly what happened, unfortunately, and that’s exactly what this government wants to do now: deny the people of Ontario that testimony from Laura Miller and Peter Faist at this committee. That’s what they want to do now: deny the people of Ontario their chance to get to the bottom of this, their chance to hear the truth.

We heard from Premier Wynne so often about how she would do everything in her power to see that all of the information that was pertinent was brought forward by the committee, that the committee would have all access. I’ve got some quotes from her. It’s quite remarkable how much she believed in the work of the committee before she got her majority:

“I remain committed to being open and transparent on this issue. I have said that as there are questions that come forward, I want those questions to be answered. This is not about protection of anyone. It’s about opening up the process....” That’s what Kathleen Wynne said in this House in Hansard. My goodness, how things have changed.

So now, over the past couple of weeks, I’ve been asking questions—my colleague Lisa MacLeod spoke about it today—about bringing Laura Miller and Peter Faist back to this committee. That’s all we’re asking for. The government House leader—he blathers on about all kinds of stuff. He’s barely coherent when he’s answering questions because I think he’s got this feeling of terrible guilt. He knows what he’s doing is wrong, and the right thing would be to bring those people before the committee. But he’s under—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order, the member from Mississauga-Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Chair, I recognize the member’s passion, but if he wishes to discuss the issue, he should do it without violating standing orders 23(h) and 23(i), which refer to the making of an allegation against a member, which he has done repeatedly, and to imputing a motive to a member, which he is doing even now. I would request that the Speaker enforce standing orders 23(h) and (i), to bring the tone of the debate down to a parliamentary level.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I take that under consideration, and I will tell the member to tread softly when he gets into those areas. It’s obviously a sensitive area, and I would ask you to try not to presume that someone did something they may not have.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Speaker. If I implied that I was reading the mind of the House leader, I apologize. It’s my belief that the House leader is feeling guilty about this, and that is why his actions in the House have been as they have been. Because he is under orders from headquarters; that much we know. The Premier rules with an iron fist. Everybody over there does exactly what they’re told—exactly what they’re told. They are told when to smile, they’re told when to laugh, they get the questions to ask and the answers are prepared in advance. We know how it goes over there.

We don’t want this committee to go on forever; we want the committee to end. I know that I’ve spoken to my colleagues in the NDP. We want this thing to end. We want to get to the bottom of it. Two more witnesses—we’ve spoken to 70 witnesses, approximately—

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Ninety.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Ninety. The House leader trumps me. If he says 90, I believe him on this one—90

witnesses. Days and days and days of depositions; it's gone on for months. And we're asking for two more. If you deny Laura Miller and Peter Faist their time before this committee—our committee's time with them—it is like having a world-famous murder trial and we shut it down before the eye-witnesses are heard from. These are the people who can solve this caper. These are the people who can direct the public to the truth, and the only person standing in the way of them is in China. The only person standing in the way of them is Premier Kathleen Wynne. If she decides—and I ask—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore has a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I'm new here, but my understanding is that members are not supposed to refer to the absence of other members.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** As long as the member says Premier Kathleen Wynne, he is within his boundaries. Individual members and ministers can only be named by their riding or title.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I've made my decision. Thank you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** When you're here a little longer—we hope it's not too long—you'll get to know about the standing orders.

The only one standing in the way of getting to the truth is Premier Kathleen Wynne. Her Deputy Premier, Deb Matthews, will be here today. The Premier, we all know—it's in the *Toronto Star*; she's been advertising it herself—is on a trip to China. But this party over here will have the opportunity to stand up for the truth.

I'm going to end here shortly, but I'm asking all of you people—and I say to the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, the new member, let your conscience guide you today. Do the right thing. I say to the member for Davenport, the new member for Durham and the member from Barrie, let your conscience be your guide today. Don't just do what the Premier's office is telling you to do. This is your opportunity to stand up for the people who elected you, to stand up for the people of Ontario and to stand up for the truth and support our motion. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker. You're very gracious in the way you say that.

I rise to support the motion before us today. As you are entirely aware, Speaker, the gas plant scandal was, and is, a sorry chapter in the life of this province. I want to talk about the context of this whole matter.

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After being elected in 2003, the Liberals, who had campaigned on a program of maintaining public ownership of our hydro system, decided to take an entirely different tack. In true Liberal fashion, they ensured that almost all new generation of electricity in this province was private, so that as coal power was phased out, private power was phased in.

It was a slow-motion privatization, a stealth privatization, which should be a warning to this whole House about where it appears this government is going with the treatment of electricity distribution companies in this province. Frankly, it was a mistake to privatize generation in Ontario, and it will be a mistake leading to similar scandals if the government is to proceed with the privatization of electricity distribution companies.

The Liberals claim that there is a huge advantage in turning generation over to the private sector, that it eliminated risk for the public, for the ratepayers. If there were going to be cost overruns, the private sector would have to pay them. If there was a delay in construction, the private sector would have to absorb the loss. If there were political problems, it was the private sector that would have to deal with them. I have to say that the experience with the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville destroys that argument.

Let me review what happened. In 2009, a contract was signed with TransCanada PipeLines to build a gas-fired power generation plant in Oakville. Within a year, that contract was cancelled, and the reason given was that the plant was no longer needed.

I have to tell you this, Speaker: That plant wasn't needed in 2009. Power demand had been dropping in the southwest GTA for a number of years at the time that that contract was signed. In fact, power demand in Ontario has continued to decline, and part of the reason we're seeing an increase in electricity costs is that the long-term energy plan factors in an ongoing decline in power demand in Ontario. That is the reality of a province that is undergoing a change in its economy, a loss of manufacturing.

When the Liberals decided to privatize this system, when they committed to the power generation industry, the power development industry, that there would be these contracts out there, they stopped looking at actual demand and started looking at the potential to engage in contracts and create huge business opportunities.

That plant was not needed in 2009 and, frankly, this government knew that. In this House, I and other New Democrats talked about the total lack of any need for that plant to be built. The people of Oakville made it completely clear that the plant was unnecessary. Before the contract was signed, the town of Oakville put in place a number of bylaws and zoning regulations that would have blocked that plant. Nonetheless, the government signed a contract, knowing there were these obstacles, being made aware that the plant was unnecessary.

So, in 2009, a plant that's not needed has a contract signed, and the government states that all the risk has been transferred to the private sector.

But that isn't what happened, Speaker. Two big considerations: One, TransCanada PipeLines came back to the government in 2010 and said, "Hey, this city is blocking us from going ahead. We want you to step in and override their bylaws."

The other consideration is that in 2010, we were getting into the election period. This government looked



at the need to preserve the seat, looked at the polls that were showing, in 2010 and 2011, a very good chance that the Conservative Party was going to win, looked at the opposition they were getting in Oakville and finally declared that this plant wasn't needed. At the time when they decided that the plant wasn't needed, they actually didn't know what it would cost to cancel or relocate.

The closest they had—and this was an email from someone in the Ontario Power Authority back to the Minister of Energy—was: “We think it could be a billion bucks.” That is the sum total of the deep analysis. That was it.

The privatization was supposed to transfer risk to the private sector. What it didn't transfer was political risk, and the Liberal Party decided that it wasn't going to take that Liberal risk; it was going to make a deal with TransCanada pipeline, save its own skin, save its own seats, and let the public and the ratepayers pay for that mistake.

This plant was cancelled at great cost to the public and relocated to Napanee, where it will be built at great expense to the public for years to come. As you're well aware, Speaker, earlier this year we did the calculations that in Ontario right now, we spend \$1 billion, a billion and a half, a year for power that we sell outside Ontario for about \$500 million. We are effectively a family with three cars that only needs one, and we're paying a lot of money to keep those other cars on the road. Occasionally we rent them to friends, get 20 bucks or 50 bucks, and we defray some of our costs, but we're stuck with this huge expense. This government went ahead with plants that weren't needed, cancelled them to save their skins and stuck the public with the bill.

In 2005 a contract was let to Greenfield power developers to build a power plant in Mississauga, and in 2005, in this House, Howard Hampton, who was then the head of the Ontario NDP, warned about the cost and the risk of proceeding with these private power deals. This government knew what it was getting into. It only had to listen to people who were involved in the energy sector to understand the risks they were taking on.

In 2009, again, after several years of dropping demand in the southwest GTA, the Liberals renegotiated the contract with the power developer. Why did they have to renegotiate? Because the developer had not been able to get financing for the plant. Think about it: a guaranteed contract for a guaranteed delivery of power and no one was willing to put money into it. By 2009, the numbers didn't work anymore.

An opportunity presented itself for this government to say, “We don't need to build this plant. We're just going to say, ‘Okay, your numbers don't work anymore. Good-bye.’” But they didn't do that. Even though power demand was dropping, they renegotiated that contract so it could go forward.

In 2011—remember 2011, an election year, an interesting year—the private power developer was able to get financing at 14% interest from a hedge fund operating with its money coming out of the Cayman Islands—14%

interest. The province of Ontario pays about 3.9%, 4% interest right now; 14% is quite extraordinary.

If you read the emails that circulated around the Ontario Power Authority at the time from some ministerial staff, there was a state of shock. It was: “How do we get out of this now? Maybe we should declare that there's an environmental problem.” “It might not work.” “Maybe we should just annul the contract.” “We could get into difficulty there.”

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And so the problem just rolled on and rolled on until the campaign buses were rolling. Those developers were not fools. They knew that if they poured concrete, if they rolled forward, they would be able to collect substantial damages.

If people remember, in that fall, the numbers for a while looked like they were going with the Conservatives, and so an announcement was made during that election that the plant would be cancelled. Quite extraordinary, Speaker. It was said at the time that this plant was in the wrong place. I have to say, the plant site had been identified in 2005. Six years later, someone realized, “Oops, maybe it's in the wrong spot.”

Speaker, it's not credible. What's credible is that someone was reading polling, someone made a political decision, and the public got to pay the price. What the Auditor General said about the Oakville and about the Mississauga plant was that in both cases we paid for effectively two plants. That was the cost.

Speaker, if these had been publicly owned plants, public projects, the public would not have been on the hook for 20 years' worth of profits that had to be paid out as damages to these companies. That was the great fear, because when you sign those contracts, it isn't like a construction contract, where you're just stuck for the cost of the building; no, you're stuck for the operational life of the plant. In fact, in some of the negotiations, there was concern by the private developers that they didn't want just 20 years of profits; they expected the plant to continue for 40 years, and they wanted that to be part of the consideration.

There is huge risk to the public when you privatize this infrastructure. This whole event illustrated it in an extraordinarily clear way.

I have to note, because there has been a lot of, I'll say gently, misdirection of vision in the course of this debate, that in 2008-09 we opposed building the plant in Oakville. We said it was a mistake. Howard Hampton said it was a mistake to go ahead with the privatization of our electricity system, and talked about the risks of the plants like the one in Mississauga.

In 2011, during that election campaign, Andrea Horwath was asked for the position of the Ontario NDP on the cancellation of the Mississauga plant, and her response, which is on record, was that she wouldn't proceed without knowing what the cost was. That was her position, just so people are clear. What did the leader of the party say? “Wouldn't proceed without knowing the cost”—a reasonable approach.

So we find Ontario in a situation where it has two plants that are being cancelled, huge liability, and the Liberals find themselves in a minority government situation. When this whole matter came before the estimates committee, when the opposition parties asked, "How much is it costing to cancel and relocate these plants?", the government had a mess on its hands because, contrary to some earlier statements that we were talking about very small numbers, the reality was that we were talking very big numbers of public money that had been risked and lost.

It was when we asked for documents and asked for people to come forward to speak that the door got kicked open on what was really going on in the Liberal Party, in the Liberal ministerial offices, because when we asked for records from the Ontario Power Authority, from the Ministry of Energy and from the Minister of Energy, we got records from two of the three but nothing from the Minister of Energy's office; zero—zero.

I took the opportunity at that time to talk to former Conservative ministerial staff and former NDP ministerial staff. Would you be in a situation on a major file where you would have nothing? Apparently not. That was unusual, to have nothing in ministerial files on a major issue.

We did find out, when a former chief of staff to a former Minister of Energy appeared before us, that on a routine basis, he deleted everything, contrary to the Archives and Recordkeeping Act that the McGuinty government had put in place in the middle of the last decade.

After a while, Speaker, it was hard to conclude anything other than that people were very systematic and conscientious about ensuring there was nothing written kept in place.

The last remaining area to be investigated is the question of records in the Premier's office. It has been alleged that there was large-scale wiping of computer disks, that Laura Miller and Peter Faist were involved in this, as has been alleged. It is currently under investigation.

Speaker, we've had a very sorry and disturbing story of privatization, of waste of public funds and of missing records. There's no doubt that the public interest has been lost in this whole matter.

It's up to this government to support this motion. It's up to this government to support the calling forward of those two witnesses to talk about who directed whom to do what, what precisely had to be allegedly wiped out, what were the conversations that led to these allegations and, presumably, the actions that have been discussed by the OPP.

Speaker, I call on the government to support this opposition day motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** He's talking to his favourite Tory.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, the government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for your patience and for recognizing me, as I was talking with my good friend from Ottawa. Actually, we were just talking about last week and what happened in our city last week, and we were just sharing notes. Thank you for your patience.

I'm very happy to have the opportunity to speak on this motion and to present our point of view on this motion. Speaker, as you have heard me say in this House a few times, there has been a lot of work done through the justice committee on this particular issue that is the subject of this motion. In terms of work, we're talking about almost three years since committees began examining this issue.

I do want to take this opportunity, because I don't think we have done that enough, to thank all the members from all three parties who have been part of the justice committee, spending hours and hours of their time listening to 90 witnesses, looking through all those hundreds of thousands of documents that have been put forward. I want to thank them. I want to thank them as members in this House, performing a very important responsibility that was given to them through this Legislature.

But, Speaker, I also say, and you've heard me talk about that before, that after all the time that they have spent, after all the analysis they have done, it is time that the committee starts their work on writing a report and providing recommendations to this House.

It is not a time to start yet another process as the member opposite, through his motion, is suggesting—a process, in fact, that the opposition brought to an end by calling an unnecessary election. There was a process ongoing and it was put to an end because the Parliament got dissolved as a result of the lack of support for the budget that the government had put forward back in late April or early May.

**1640**

The work that the committee was doing was moving ahead at that time, was coming to a conclusion. In fact, members were engaging in the process of writing the report, and I'll come to that in a moment to remind members of what was said in the committee in that regard. But it is important, as other members have done who have spoken to this motion before me on this issue, to have a little bit of the history on this file, because, depending on who you listen to, you get a bit of a different narrative on what happened.

It's very clear that the government listened to the concerns of the residents and relocated the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants. I recall very clearly that the residents of both Oakville and Mississauga were not content with the decision to site those particular gas plants at those particular locations. As many community members said, and as we representatives of our communities would hear our constituents on different issues, there was a very clear and strong opinion on the part of the communities in Mississauga and Oakville about those gas plants. Members who came from those areas did their job



by advocating on behalf of their constituents, like we all do in this House every single day on issues that are important to our communities. And the government did the right thing. The government listened to those communities and made the decision to relocate the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants.

The government was not the only one who made that decision. Of course, the government, being in the position of governing, gets to make decisions, and they made the decision. But all three political parties listened to the same residents in Oakville and Mississauga and committed that, if elected, they would relocate the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga.

#### *Interjections.*

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I remind members who may be heckling on the sidelines of their own records in stating that. In October 2010, for example, the NDP member from Toronto–Danforth stated, “I don’t agree with the Oakville power plant; I don’t think it’s necessary.” In September 2011, the member from Toronto–Danforth again stated, “We wouldn’t build it,” and that was about the Mississauga gas plant.

In September 2010, the former PC member from Halton, Mr. Ted Chudleigh, stated in question period—and I remember him actually speaking quite a few times and voicing his opinion on behalf of his constituents in Oakville when it came to those gas plants. But in September 2010, he said, “Oakville residents have called on you to change the location of the proposed Oakville power plant.... I have listened to the people of Oakville, and I agree with them”—very clearly saying, “Hey, government, relocate the gas plant” in that particular instance.

Our favourite, something that my predecessor, the former government House leader, often reminded us of, was when the former leader of the official opposition, the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook, was asked if he would scrap the Mississauga gas plant—this is in October 2011, in the middle of an election campaign, and it’s all documented in a YouTube video. You don’t have to take my word for it; you can Google it. It’s one of the best-sellers out there. When he was asked point-blank by one of the reporters from this Legislature whether or not he would scrap the Mississauga gas plant, he replied, “That’s right.... Done, done, done.”

All three political parties expressed their support. By listening to the concerns of the residents of Mississauga and Oakville, they expressed their support to relocate those two gas plants. The government, being successful in an election campaign on the promise to do so when elected, fulfilled its promise and did take the action to relocate the Mississauga gas plant after the October 2011 election.

In the past election that just happened in May and June 2014, we as a party were very clear that the justice committee should complete its work by writing a report. The media have asked us often about that and we were very clear that that’s the direction we want to go. We want the committee to complete its work by writing a report.

In fact, as I mentioned earlier today in question period, and as the member from Nepean–Carleton reminded us yesterday in question period, in the speech from the throne subsequent to the election we stated very clearly that we would like the justice committee to resume its work and start the process of writing the report. There’s a very good reason for it: It has been over nearly three years in which committees have considered this particular issue. Ninety witnesses have testified and over 400,000 documents have been provided to the committee, including 30,000 documents from the Premier’s office. There is a lot of information that has been shared that is in the possession of the committee to now write the report and give its advice to the Legislature. Many of the witnesses, in fact, have appeared twice, including the Premier and the Minister of Energy. It is critical that the committee be able to present a report to the government so that we can move forward and benefit from the recommendations.

As I said at the outset of my comments, we’re not the only ones who have been saying that it is time to write the report. In fact, members of the opposition have also recognized the need to get to report writing. I’d like to again quote—that’s the good thing about Hansard: You’ve got that information at your disposal. On December 12, the member, again, from Toronto–Danforth stated, “I believe it’s time for us to get down to report writing. We’ve amassed a large amount of evidence, both oral and in electronic copy.” Then he moved on to put forward a motion in justice committee to begin report writing, in which he stated, “I move that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy meet on the following days for the purpose of report writing.”

I couldn’t agree more. It is time to start writing the report. The committee has amassed a lot of information upon which it can now write a report and present its recommendations to this House.

On April 29, merely days before the leader of the third party informed all of us that she and her party would not be supporting a very progressive budget that this government had put forward, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, a few days before the leader of the third party decided not to support a progressive budget in the province, moved a motion in the committee to begin report writing. It states: “I move that ... the Standing Committee on Justice Policy begin report writing in open session.”

So I just ask the members of the third party: What’s changed? This is as early as April 29 of this year. The simple reason is, and I agree with the belief they had, that there is enough information. The committee has a lot of documents in their hands. They have talked to a lot of people. They’ve had access to the Premier and to the Minister of Energy. They have time to write the report.

Now the people of Ontario have sent our government back to Queen’s Park with a strong mandate, and they’ve asked us to get this work done.

#### **1650**

Speaker, as I stated earlier, we’ve expressed that view in our speech from the throne, and we are very com-

mitted to having a productive parliamentary session and delivering on the promises we made during the election. This means that there will be a lot of work for committees to consider, and we need all the parties to work together to get that done. We must ensure that committees, including the justice committee, are able to move forward and consider the important legislation before them.

Speaker, as I'm getting closer to the end of my comments, I would like to note that the entire premise of this opposition day motion, in our view, is not correct. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is asking this assembly to express our opinion on what is necessary to fulfill the justice committee's mandate. As the member knows, there is currently no mandate before the justice committee. This past May, Parliament was dissolved after the opposition parties triggered an unnecessary election by refusing to support the budget. Because of their actions, all business before this House and its committees came to an end. Even though the justice committee's prior mandate was terminated in May, the Premier committed to giving the justice committee an opportunity to write its report.

The member's motion, Speaker, also misstates the original mandate of the justice committee. The committee began by considering a *prima facie* finding of contempt related to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates. The Premier later expanded the scope of the committee's mandate to also include the tendering, planning, commissioning, cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants. Speaker, it is simply incorrect to suggest that the committee had a mandate to investigate matters relating to an OPP investigation into the actions of the former chief of staff to the former Premier.

By putting forward this motion, the member is suggesting that we insert ourselves into an ongoing police investigation. Speaker, you'll agree that this would be entirely inappropriate.

We have full confidence in the OPP's abilities. The police are doing their work, and we must let them continue to do that work. In fact, former OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis testified last spring about his discomfort with legislative committees looking into ongoing police investigations. He explained that he would "rather not see these committees occur in the middle of ongoing investigations."

Speaker, we will continue to co-operate fully with the police investigation, but we will not hinder it by pretending that we, ourselves, can stand in the place of police or that we are competent to do their jobs.

It is time that the opposition stop delaying and allow the justice committee to finally write their report.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to join the debate, as the former energy critic for the official opposition.

I'd also like to recognize two people, before I begin my debate, who are from eastern Ontario and are very good friends of mine. First is Chris McDonnell, who's the mayor of North Glengarry—he's also the brother of the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Jim McDonnell—and our good friend George Currier, who is here, as well, up from eastern Ontario. George is in town, in the big city of Toronto, to receive an award tomorrow night, and we're very happy that he's here.

I'm pleased to follow the debate from the government House leader, who at the beginning of his remarks said he was over talking to me. We are friends. Our ridings are very close to each other in the city of Ottawa. But we part ways on our interpretation of the events that unfolded with relation to the cancelling of the two gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville, the political direction that came from his party, and then of course the investigations by the Auditor General—two had taken place—as well as the OPP.

I must say at the outset that I attended all of those hearings, as the energy critic and the lead for our party in the justice committee at that time, and at no point ever did the OPP say that we shouldn't be probing this; in fact, they were very helpful to our cause, in the assembly and in the committee, and we received a lot of good advice from the OPP.

But let's go back to 2011: 2011 was when, in the middle of an election campaign—and I remember clear as day seeing a Robert Benzie tweet on a Saturday, in the Toronto Star, that Dalton McGuinty was going to cancel one of the two gas plants. The other one had been cancelled about a year before.

It was a blatant play and later admitted to by the current Premier, that it was a political play—politically advantageous to the Liberals—in order to win the 2011 election. What resulted after that, and I say this for the benefit of new members and those at home who may have forgotten this drama, is that the two opposition parties, the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats, rose and wanted a point of privilege to deal with a *prima facie* breach. When we did that, it was found by the Speaker that there was a breach, because we had asked for documents, and we were not provided them. It started out in the estimates committee.

Then we were able to succeed in having the justice committee probe this cancellation. The Auditor General then, through public accounts, took on not one but two special audits to deal with this, and we found out the cost would eventually become \$1.2 billion.

And if that wasn't bad enough—and this is why we're here today—then there was the alleged destruction of documents, and the OPP, for the first time in Ontario history, decided they were going to do an ongoing investigation into the Premier's office. That all occurred in April 2014. I say this because Chris McDonnell is here—he's a former OPP officer—and he and I have spoken about this on many occasions.

What we are concerned with here in the opposition is not to debate the facts between what happened with the



cancellation of the plants or where things should have been sited—no. What we are talking about now is the alleged destruction of documents and a role that two individuals may have played who at dissolution were expected to appear before committee, and that is Laura Miller and Peter Faist. What we are asking for with this Progressive Conservative opposition motion, Speaker, is simply to invite them to committee for them to testify and let us know what they know with respect to the alleged destruction of documents just two feet down the hallway here, in the Premier's office. That isn't too much to ask, and it does not delay. It could be done on the same day. It could have been done by now. It could have been done during the summer break.

But it is the Liberals who are obstructing our ability to do that, and I take certain issue with that, particularly on a day when they have put forward for debate second reading of Bill 8, which is about transparency and accountability. On the one hand, you cannot say you are wanting a greater degree of transparency and accountability in the province of Ontario with respect to your government, and then, on the other hand, quash this motion and prevent us from speaking to the two people who know more about the cancellation of the gas plants and the deleted emails than anyone else.

As Progressive Conservatives or as members of the third party in the New Democrats, we have a duty: Our duty is to stand up for the minority in this province, the people who do not support the government agenda. They have a right to be heard as well, and there is an expectation—and I believe a reasonable expectation—placed upon the government to do what is right by the people of this province, regardless of who they voted for in the last election.

If you truly want to talk about accountability, if you truly want to talk about transparency, then you would support this motion. What harm could it do? If they don't have anything that's relevant to testify, then it will be in your favour. You'll look like the reasonable adults in the room. Otherwise, what it signals to the people of the province, what it signals to the media, what it signals to the opposition, what it signals to the people who are looking for increasing transparency and accountability, is that you're too afraid to let the sun shine in, you're too afraid to allow these individuals to take the stand.

On that note, I thank you all for allowing me to participate in the debate. I congratulate our energy critic, John Yakabuski, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to clarify some issues here that we've spoken about but haven't been very clear on.

First of all, let's understand one thing: There's a criminal investigation, and we have to understand the parameters of that. What does that mean? What does it mean when the OPP is investigating the actions of this government?

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The OPP have a specific mandate. They investigate potential violations of the Criminal Code of Canada. They investigate what might be a crime. If there is evidence to establish that there is a crime, there will be a prosecution of that crime. That's a very important role that the police play, but that's not mutually exclusive to the role that we play as the opposition.

The opposition's role is to provide oversight for the government, to provide oversight into what the government does, to act as a check and balance to the power of the government. It is incumbent upon us, as the opposition, to ensure that we fulfill our obligation by holding the government to account. How do we do that? We need to ask questions. We need to gain information. We need to present that information to the public.

When the government House leader states that doing what we are supposed to do—what our obligation is, what our responsibility is—is somehow inserting ourselves into a criminal investigation, that's absolutely wrong. In fact, it is our responsibility to check the powers of the government, to hold the government to account, to ask the question: Did the government act in an appropriate manner?

It also requires us to look at the different burdens of proof. In a criminal investigation, if it looks like someone probably did it, very likely did the crime, that's not enough to prove guilt. The burden of proof in a criminal investigation is proof beyond a reasonable doubt. To attain that level of proof beyond a reasonable doubt—that's a high standard. You might have all sorts of evidence that might actually hold up in a civil court, that might actually result in a lawsuit that's successful. You might be able to sue someone for damages and get a million-dollar settlement because, on a balance of probabilities, it's more likely than not that someone was wrong or negligent or made a mistake. Then you can win a court case on a civil level.

In a criminal investigation, you have to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that someone was guilty of the offence. If there's any reasonable doubt raised, the person is no longer guilty. Does that mean there's no accountability? Does that mean we can't move forward with making sure the government acts in an appropriate manner? If there are no criminal charges laid or there's no conviction, does that mean the government acted appropriately? No. That's absolutely not the case, and it would be silly to think that.

Let me give you a strong example of the difference between a criminal investigation and our job as legislators in the opposition.

The Orme scandal was a very serious scandal. This an essential service provided by our government. The air ambulance service is something we need. In certain remote communities, that is the only source of ambulance to get someone who is injured to a place where they can be taken care of. That is the only way to do it.

The air ambulance service had all sorts of problems. There were some serious scandals involved with that.

There was also a criminal investigation into Ornge. The opposition party, with the help of some great journalism and the opposition's work—we found that there was a serious problem. Questions that we asked years and years ago about the CEO's compensation, the salary of the CEO of Ornge—when that went off the sunshine list, we asked questions: Why did that get off the list? Where is that salary? When we finally got the answer to that and we found out the CEO was making \$1.4 million, an outrageous amount—more than the biggest hospital in the province—we realized there was a serious problem.

So without any criminal investigation, without any criminal charges laid, the CEO was removed; the entire board was removed; the entire air ambulance system was changed by the opposition. By challenging what was going on, by calling this government to account, by challenging the way the government was handling all these red flags, the work of the committee created some great change. We actually were able to change the entire face of this air ambulance service with the work of the committee. That wasn't because of the criminal investigation. The criminal investigation is still ongoing, and there have not been any charges laid.

This is a clear example of how our work as opposition actually helped improve the quality of care that we receive here in Ontario. By asking questions, by saying, "Listen, let's bring witnesses to the committee. Let's hear from them. Let's learn what went wrong and hear what went wrong to fix it." The pressure that we applied on Ornge improved it.

Similarly, in this circumstance, we need to do our job. Our job is to hold this government to account. In no way do we suggest that, by holding the government to account, we are somehow inserting ourselves into the criminal investigation. The criminal investigation is separate. They have a separate onus. They have a separate burden of proof. It's a completely different issue. Holding someone criminally liable, to prove someone to be guilty or not guilty, is absolutely different than our job as opposition, to hold this government to account. I take issue with those two roles being conflated.

Now, why are these two witnesses important? There are a number of successes that we were able to achieve, as the opposition, with respect to the gas plants issue. First and foremost, we learned through the committee hearing process that the manner in which this government cancelled the gas plants was the most expensive way possible to do it. We learned that there were alternative ways to cancel the gas plants, which may have or could have resulted in actually no costs to taxpayers, that those options were not used. Why? Why was it the case that this government didn't pursue an option to cancel the gas plants that wouldn't have cost us anything? That's something we need to know. We need to know because it holds the government to account, it instills trust in the institutions so that the public understands why these decisions were made, and if they were made in error, we can learn from those mistakes. We can ensure that they aren't made again in the future. That's

the role of the opposition. That's the role that we have to fulfill.

We also learned that the estimates provided by the government as to the cost of this cancellation were completely off the mark, off target. They initially suggested that the cost was in the hundred millions, maybe \$200 million, in that range. Well, it turns out it was \$1.2 billion. That's something that we uncovered because of the work of our committee, because of the work we did by bringing witnesses to committee, asking the questions and requesting documents. That was the success that we were able to achieve by holding this government to account, to say, "Listen. Your estimates were absolutely wrong. When you estimated that it would be \$100 million or \$200 million, in fact it's \$1.2 billion." That was something that we were able to achieve as part of the opposition.

All the while, all this was achieved without any criminal charges laid, without any sort of convictions. This was the work of the committee. This is important work. This is separate from a criminal prosecution, and I want to highlight that. We can achieve a lot without the criminal investigation component, which is important, which should continue, which we encourage to see what can happen from that as well.

Why are these two witnesses so important? On one hand, we see the government made a crass political decision to cost taxpayers billions of dollars, to cost taxpayers so much, to save seats. That's one thing that we wanted to hold this government to account for. On top of that outrageous cost, that absurd cost to our system, to our taxpayers, to Ontario citizens, that could have been used in other ways more effectively, more productively, could have built hospitals, could have built a university—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Paid for PSWs.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** —could have paid for PSWs—actually paid for PSWs instead of saying maybe we'll pay for them, or we'll pay for some but not others. That's one component.

The second component is, when we talk about transparency and accountability, the public deserves to know why the government is making decisions, what the basis of those decisions was, how they happened, why they happened, the details of those decisions. How does the public know? How do we know, as opposition, what decisions were made? We know that by looking at the evidence. What is the evidence in this case? That is the records.

It's interesting to note this: The records aren't the Liberal government's records. The records aren't the opposition's records. These records are the people of Ontario's. They own these records. Those are their records. This is a part of the institution and a part of the history of this province. It provides us with a narrative of what went on. It provides us with evidence as to why decisions were made.

When this government allegedly deletes records, this creates a serious barrier to accountability and transparency. We can't tell what happened because all the emails



were allegedly wiped and deleted. Computers were allegedly wiped and deleted. We can't find out what happened. There is no accountability or transparency because of the deletions.

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Secondly, these are documents that are a part of the history of this province, of the legislative proceedings, of the decision-making that goes on in this province. This is information that should be protected and maintained for the public. So when they're deleted, it's pretty important to find out why they were deleted. Who deleted it?

Now, at the heart of this, at the heart of the deletion, are two individuals. They are the subject matter of criminal investigations, and they are the alleged people who actually deleted or wiped the computers. Now, if you agree with us that transparency is important, and you've alleged that transparency is important, if you agree that accountability is important, then we should find out, in the gas plant committee, why these two individuals deleted those emails. Why did they allegedly wipe those computers? What was their purpose to do that? Who told them to do that? What were their instructions? Why did this happen? These are pretty fundamental questions that we need to answer.

Again, this is our role as opposition: to check the power of the government. This is something that's a long and tested and true foundation of our legislative system, and we want to simply fulfill our obligation here. This is something that we're not only entitled to, but that we need to do. It's our duty to do this, to ensure that the public has a true picture of what went on.

Doesn't it make sense that if this is the heart of the problem, that records were deleted—you're bringing forward an accountability bill; you're bringing forward a bill to say, "Okay, we won't delete records in the future." Why are you bringing forward that bill? Because they were deleted right here. That's why you're bringing that bill forward. So if you're bringing that bill forward because records were deleted, doesn't it make sense for us to find out why they were deleted? Doesn't that make sense? Unless you're simply bringing forward that bill as a guise to hide and to move away from, to distract from the real issue, then I understand; then that's a different issue. But if you're genuinely bringing forward a bill that talks about the importance of record-keeping, then wouldn't you think it's important also to find out why records were deleted?

I'm just putting that forward to you. I think that's pretty straightforward. I think that makes some sense. I see some nods over there. I'm glad to see this is getting through a little bit. That's why I'm standing in support of the motion. This is essential, that we get to the bottom of this.

Another issue that has been raised by the government House leader—to me, it's quite interesting that these issues are raised, when we have examples of this all the time. The government House leader from the Liberal Party mentions that I brought forward a motion saying we should begin report writing. Of course we should

begin report writing, but that doesn't mean we can't hear from additional witnesses. How does that preclude us from hearing additional witnesses? The fact that I say, "Hey, let's write a report"—writing a report doesn't mean, "No, you must not have any more additional witnesses." There's no logical connection between that.

In fact, in Ornge—this is in a sitting committee that we had—we had report writing and at the same time, on other dates, we had witnesses. We did that. That actually happened. You can look into Hansard and confirm this. In the Ornge committee, we began report writing because we realized there was a lot of evidence and we needed to start writing the report; of course we did. But at the same time, we heard from some additional witnesses.

So, again, to the House leader: How does that make any sense, that if you want to begin the report writing, you can't hear from additional witnesses? Yes, you can. You easily can. You begin the report writing. When the witnesses come in, you pause. You hear from those additional witnesses and you go back to report writing. It's not very difficult to do. There's actually no problem with that.

I'm confused, and I can bet you—who wants to join in this bet? I bet anyone on the government side that when we ask this question again—I'm going to tell you right now; I'm going to foresee the future. When we ask this question again, "Why is this government not willing to allow these two witnesses to come forward?" you're going to say two things. I'm going to tell you what you're going to say. You're going to say, "Oh, we don't want to insert ourselves in a criminal investigation." I've already told you we're not doing that. You're going to say that again, though, because—I don't know—that's what you're going to say. Secondly, you're going to say, "Oh, but the members said they wanted to begin report writing, so how can we hear from a witness and begin report writing?" Well, we did that in Ornge, actually. It's very easy to do that. So yes, we can definitely do that. You're going to say it again. I'm going to say this again, because it's pretty straightforward: I'm confused as to why you're going to bring up illogical explanations that don't add up, but please feel free to continue. We'll continue to point out how illogical they are.

In my remaining minutes, let's summarize the position here.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Are you going to support Horwath or not?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I am most definitely going to support our leader, Andrea Horwath.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Let's understand the situation here—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** All right. Remember me? You're having little cross-border discussions there. I'd like to be part of it. I feel left out.

We've got seven sidebars going on over here. I can hardly hear the speaker, and he's got a strong voice. So if you'd like to have major discussions, maybe you'd like

to take some of your groups on the other side of the wall, especially the member from Etobicoke North. I know he's very co-operative. Thanks very much.

Continue.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** In summary, one of the hallmarks, one of the foundations of our democratic institutions is transparency and accountability. For the people of the province to have trust in the government, they need to see that the government is transparent and it's accountable.

We see that there is, year after year, a declining number of folks who are actually participating in the political process. Voter turnout is going down, year after year. That's a serious problem. Part of that problem is that politics has become cynical. The problem is that when we see a government that lacks accountability and transparency, it turns people off from politics. They think that it doesn't matter, that there is no trust, there's no faith in this government. That's why it's so important for us, as opposition, to make sure that we do our job to re-instill some faith in the political process by fighting for transparency and accountability. If you take seriously this promise that your government has made, you'll understand that this motion is simply talking about ensuring that there is accountability and transparency.

Our job as opposition members is very different from the criminal prosecution side and from the criminal investigation side. Our job is to make sure the government did the right thing and, if they didn't, to say that you did the wrong thing and point it out by you looking at the evidence.

We need to look at the evidence; that's our job. The evidence will come in the form of looking at additional witnesses. We can definitely begin report writing, but we need to hear from these additional witnesses. We need to hear from the two people who lie at the heart of the records deletion. We need to talk to those individuals and find out why they deleted those records. Why did they wipe computers?

This is at the crux of this issue. If you are truly serious about accountability, then you need to support this motion, as I will, to ensure that there is accountability and transparency in our government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Good afternoon, Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to this particular opposition day motion, which has been so much a part of my legislative life for the past two and a half years.

I'd like to start off by recounting what the committee was set up to do in the late winter of 2012. It was about two things. Thing number 1 was to determine whether or not the former Minister of Energy was in contempt of the House. Our first witness, the former House of Commons Speaker, Peter Milliken, acknowledged as the dean of procedure in Canada, testified, in hour 1 of day 1, that in his estimation, he was not. In essence, that part was resolved on day 1.

The other part, and perhaps the weighty part: The committee was charged with producing a series of

recommendations on the siting and the relocation of energy infrastructure in the province of Ontario. The committee is now ready to offer that precise advice.

What the committee was not set up to do was some of the things that are mentioned in this particular motion. The assertion behind this motion is that the answer to whether or not the committee has any recommendations on the siting and the relocation of energy infrastructure in Ontario has something to do with—wait for this, now—the boyfriend of the former assistant to the former chief of staff of the former Premier. That's a pretty distant smoking gun, Speaker.

Perhaps, after this opposition day motion, the opposition may move on to something else, but let's just deal with this opposition day motion. Let's start by putting it into some measure of perspective.

1720

We're considering here—let's call it, for the purposes of this particular address—the gas plant committee. Let's compare the gas plant committee with two other committees of inquiry that people know in their history books. Let's compare the gas plant committee with Lord Mersey's committee into the sinking of the Titanic. It was commissioned on the 2nd of May, 1912, and it held 36 hearing days in the UK and 18 hearing days in the United States. Let's compare that with the Warren Commission in the United States, which was commissioned by President Johnson on the 18th of November, 1963, and submitted its final report on the 24th of September, 1964. That was an 888-page report done in not quite 11 months—not quite 10 months.

Now, in the past two and a half years the gas plant committee has heard from 91 witnesses, it has heard 145 hours of testimony and it has examined some 400,000 pages of documents. As a member of that committee, as the government's lead on it, I too examined my share of those documents, sat through nearly all of those hours of committee and participated in the questioning of the various witnesses who came forward. I think it would be incumbent on me, in ending the government's remarks on this particular opposition day motion, to just recount what we actually found out during our examination of the gas plant committee.

To grasp the whole truth on that committee you've got to go back to the August 2003 power blackout. Now, this concerns an area in which I live, because I'm a Mississauga member. When the lights went out on the 14th of August, 2003, one of last areas to get their power back was an area called by the Ontario Power Authority the southwest GTA. When the lights were back on—this, by the way, was still on the watch of the government that preceded us—we asked, “Why did it take so long to get the southwest GTA”—for all practical purposes this means Mississauga and Oakville—“back on line so quickly and what were the risks looking forward?”

One of those risks was that Mississauga and Oakville lacked the ability to generate power. The estimates were based upon data collected on the watch of the former government between 1995 and 2003. We said that based



on the best information that the province had right now in that year of 2004, one of the things that the province of Ontario needed at that time was additional generating capacity, peak-power generating capacity, in the southwest GTA. This means Mississauga and Oakville.

In 2004, the Ministry of Energy put out a request for proposals for power generation to cover the southwest GTA. There were four bids submitted, two later withdrawn, and it left two that were accepted. Those two were by TransCanada Energy in Oakville and a firm called Eastern Power in Mississauga.

Let's recap: What is a gas plant? A gas plant is something that's off between 90% and 95% of the time. Between 5% and 10% of the time what a gas plant does is it boils water, and it raises steam which spins a turbine which generates electricity. The advantage of natural gas as a fuel is that you can turn it on and off very, very quickly.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, we wish we could turn it off.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Order, please.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Now, being able to turn a gas plant on and off means that in the event that you have a sudden power outage, you can recover from it. This was the thinking at that time.

There has been an assertion of, "Well, who put the plants there?" It's an interesting question. It's one that, actually, the gas plant committee resolved and resolved conclusively.

We received testimony from Gregory Vogt. Gregory Vogt is the president of Eastern Power, the firm that won the contract to build the gas plant in Mississauga. Mr. Vogt turned over a letter that was sent to him dated—wait for this—July 12, 2005. The letter is from the planning and building department of the city of Mississauga. On July 12, 2005, the supervisor of zoning of the planning and building department of the city of Mississauga advised the proponent, Eastern Power—and I'm going to use the words of the letter exactly. Referring to the property on Loreland Avenue in Mississauga on which the Mississauga gas plant would later be started and was at the time proposed to be built, it said, "The lands may be used for, among other things, manufacturing or industrial undertakings which would include the generation and distribution of electrical power."

Who put the plants there? We now know the answer: the city of Mississauga.

With the plant located there, on the strength of an authorization by the city of Mississauga to the proponent—now, the reason this was done is because that land was zoned, and I'm going to quote the exact wording of the zoning, "industrial/power plant." The land in Oakville was zoned "industrial."

Very clearly both proponents—TransCanada Energy and Eastern Power—legally, properly and ethically acquired land zoned by the respective municipalities precisely for the purposes for which they had legally acquired a contract to build a power generation station.

Note that at this point the province of Ontario is not involved. It was the responsibility of the power plant proponents to find that land, which they did. It was the responsibility of the proponents to ensure that the land was properly zoned by the municipality, which they did.

The Oakville plant was very clearly located in the wrong area. In fact, Oakville mayor Rob Burton gave testimony before the committee and he said the same thing as Mayor McCallion: In both cases, the land had been zoned many years earlier, and it was only later that the municipalities said, "Oh, we hadn't really realized that we had zoned that land for that purpose, and in light of the development around it maybe we shouldn't have zoned it that way." To which the proponent said, "Well, we legally acquired the land. Why didn't you tell us when we were about to buy it, or, more appropriately, why didn't you just change the zoning?"

Now, this gives rise to one of the obvious recommendations to come out of this committee, which is that municipalities must review their zoning for electricity infrastructure and do it regularly and do it with proper public consultation. This didn't happen.

Mississauga took Eastern Power to the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would like to remind the member—I appreciate the background information—there is a motion put forward and I would ask that you specifically address the motion, which is with regard to the standing committee, and that you refer to the individuals involved and what the standing committee needs to have done. Thank you.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker. The Speaker did grant the other speakers a degree of latitude to explain the context within which they had made their motion or made their arguments. It's my contention that the premise—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I've been here for about 11 years now and it is not only not customary, it's against the rules to challenge the ruling of a Speaker. That seems to be what the member for Mississauga—Streetsville is doing right now. You've asked him to stick to the topic at hand, the motion that has been presented before the House. He seems to be challenging you on that, saying that you gave somebody else more latitude. It's not the job of the member to tell the Speaker what to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I will take that into consideration.

I'll refer back to the member from Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Despite the member's intent to impute motive, that was in fact not my motive.

Speaker, the motion asks us—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Point of order: I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Speaker. That is a direct accusation against myself by the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. I was not impugning his motive whatsoever. What I was bringing to your attention, Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member for bringing that to my attention, but I will turn it back to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and I would encourage that that banter discontinue. Thank you.

1730

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

Let's go back to what we're here to talk about, where we were at before some of this stuff came about: With respect to the motion, we were talking about. How did the siting of the two plants arise? Because many of the documents that the motion talks about relate to the siting of these plants.

With the plants located where they were, despite the fact that the locations in the context of that time were seen to be inappropriate—and, in fact, I've just produced the document that came up in the process of the committee that says very clearly that permission came from the city of Mississauga—what we ended up with is a situation in which the only entity that could take action was the province. As with Oakville—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Point of order, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I draw your attention to standing order 23(b)(i):

"23. In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she....

"(b) Directs his or her speech to matters other than,

"(i) the question under discussion; or

"(ii) a motion or amendment he or she intends to move; or

"(iii) a point of order."

The question under discussion, as you have pointed out to the member, Speaker, is the motion before the House, the motion that is asking the House to rule that Laura Miller and Peter Faist be called before committee. The member from Mississauga–Streetsville is on an engineering expedition talking about the siting of plants, not about the witnesses and their testimony, which is paramount to this investigation.

I would ask you to direct the member back to the matter at hand: the motion that is before the House, under 23.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member for that. Again, I would reference that the member from Mississauga–Streetsville make his comments as they are relevant to motion number 1, the motion at hand.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker. As I said in my opening remarks, I covered the actual terms of reference for the committee. Let me continue on this.

In a cancellation—this is the seminal event that would subsequently give rise to the documentation to which the member who has just objected to my remarks is referring. So I think it is germane, Speaker, that we talk about that decision that would later give rise to the documents about which the member has made this motion.

At this point, and this would be 2005 or 2006, there was very little point in paying cancellation costs if the taxpayer of Ontario wasn't going to get any electricity for their money. In the context of the 2011 election, which is something both parties have talked about, this is exactly what they were proposing. This is why the government chose not to do it.

The province worked out a swap with Eastern Power to have them relocate their plant—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** He seems to be drifting right back to where he was under standing order 23, Speaker—drifting right back to where he is, making excuses as to why they cancelled and relocated the gas plants, when the motion is about bringing Laura Miller and Peter Faist before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. That's the motion that is being debated before the House and the one we will shortly vote on, but the member is not speaking to that motion. He seems to be making excuses as to why they made the decision to cancel and relocate the gas plants. I would ask that he stick to the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** That is a point of order taken under consideration, but I believe the member from Mississauga–Streetsville was trying to entertain the fact of your question, and he was trying to link why he was going down that way of thought. I think there is a link—it may be remote—to his explanation of why.

In reference to your comments about the two witnesses you'd like to bring back, obviously he doesn't feel that's part of his answer or his review. So I am assuming that this is a very touchy situation that could go either way, and I don't feel that that was a point of order.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker. One of the other things that the documents which the motion refers relate to is in fact the cost of the relocation. Now, as reported in the Legislature, the cancellation cost, in the case of Oakville, was \$40 million, and this amount was fully paid out in the year 2011. For Mississauga, it was \$275 million. This amount was fully paid out in the year 2012.

Now, here's a point about which the other two parties have both presented information that's not accurate: The balance of the costs and savings—because there are savings involved in the cancellation of both plants—were for changes, both up and down, in gas delivery costs, transmission costs, renegotiation of contracts and the like.



**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It cost \$1.1 billion.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, these costs and savings were not paid out—they were not paid out—and both the costs and the savings will be spread out over the next 30 years or the expected lifespan of the two plants, should they ever have—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Are you two done?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, I don't think we're done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** You may be done. You may be done. You will be done, done, done.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Now, Speaker, these extra costs and savings amount to this: Over a span of 30 years, costs of between one and two one-hundredths of one cent per kilowatt hour and savings of between two and four one-hundredths of one cent per kilowatt hour during the same time span. If your mental math tells you that the extra savings would cancel out the extra costs, you would be right. For a home that consumes about 1,000 kilowatt hours every two months, your extra cost would be between 10 and 20 cents, offset by additional savings of between 20 and 40 cents, netting out to an average savings of between 10 and 20 cents on your bill every two months over the span of the next 30 years.

Now, Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It is absolutely my pleasure and honour to bring this debate back on topic after we wandered for the last few moments. I want to start off by saying that I'm positive this past week has had an impact on all of us. For me particularly, and I hope for all of us in this chamber, it has heightened our awareness and our sensitivity, and actually our pride in democracy. That brings us exactly to point why we need to see two key witnesses come to the justice policy committee. This is about fulfilling our democratic responsibility as official opposition to do our job and get it done.

I don't take this responsibility lightly at all, and it troubles me: We've only been back two weeks, since October 20, and we heard a member opposite refer to committee work as a dog-and-pony show earlier this week. Just moments ago, I heard another member opposite say, "I want to go home." Well, Speaker, that's not the type of representation that citizens—taxpayers and ratepayers—in Ontario deserve. They need people to stand up for their rights in how their money is being wasted by this scandal-plagued government.

Speaker, never before have I stood before you so determined to make sure that we do right, because it comes back again to honouring our democratic responsibility. I'm just so troubled by the manner in which this government, in two short weeks, is showing so much arrogance.

Ladies and gentlemen watching at home, we have a situation ahead of us where we have a government actually trying to block work that needs to be done in the

committee. We're talking about \$1.1 billion, scarce tax dollars that we can't afford to have wasted on any more scandals.

**1740**

It's interesting that when we talk about our committee work—I want to quote the Premier. Just last Parliament, in the 40th Parliament, the Premier said, "I've been clear that my position is that the committee should have the opportunity to ask the questions that it wants to ask." Well, Speaker, we want to hear from Laura Miller; we want to hear from Peter Faist.

I sat on this justice policy committee, and I was troubled with the manner in which smokescreens were shared by the government. I am really interested and intrigued by the manner in which they danced around issues that so many people brought to light and said we needed to delve into further. I think of our privacy commissioner of the day, Ann Cavoukian. She takes full responsibility for everything she does, and she doesn't do it lightly—nothing is a knee-jerk reaction. Ann Cavoukian struggled with determining what was right and what was wrong, and I can tell you that she determined—by calling this Liberal government out—that there is a problem here with the information that has disappeared. She, too, in the spirit of democracy, wanted to see that hidden information come to light. It reinforces the work that the good people on the standing committee were doing. We have a job to do, and all we ask is that this Liberal government stop blocking us from getting our job done. Again, it's very interesting how this mass on the floor opposite from us is sitting there in a way that is manoeuvring and blocking. It's not a game anymore. I come back to upholding our democratic responsibilities as official opposition to hold this government accountable.

It's an interesting thing, and I want to emphasize the fact, that it was \$1 billion of scandal-plagued activities that has seen this Liberal government just spiral out of control. If we don't kick off this 41st Parliament leading by example and holding this government to account, then we're not doing our jobs.

I, too, echo some comments that my colleague from Nepean—Carleton shared earlier today. It's pretty rich, on a day that we're debating Bill 8, about transparency and accountability, that we have a Liberal government doing everything they can to keep us from getting to the truth. This is unacceptable, and Ontario deserves so much better.

Our opposition day motion insists that the committee mandate be expanded and allow Mr. Faist and Ms. Miller to testify. I was taken aback a little bit during this debate when the government House leader suggested that the committee wants a new process. Nothing is further from the truth. We just want to finish the job that we started. Ontario taxpayers deserve that. Honest to Pete, when you talk about destroying evidence, when you talk about the overt actions that were taken to keep us from learning the truth, it's despicable, and we should be embarrassed by

this Liberal government and the actions and extent they're going to, to keep us from getting to the truth.

As I conclude my remarks for today, I want to say that we have to do right. We have to finish the job that got started. This is not a new process. We can't let this Liberal government confuse people and suggest that it is. We need to stand tall and bring Peter Faist and Laura Miller to committee so we can get to the bottom of it once and for all.

I look forward to hearing from my colleague from Chatham-Kent in a few moments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It is a privilege to stand before this assembly and to discuss and debate the opposition day motion pertaining to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

Speaker, we've all been sent here—all three parties—for a mission, and that mission is to best represent the people in our ridings, but in this case, the people of Ontario. I call it bang for buck, and unfortunately, what has occurred prior to this last election was a Liberal government that was caught with their hands in the cookie jar as it pertains to scandals—gas plant scandals.

Of course, there was sensitive information that had been found on hard drives. People were in fact saying, "Listen. We need more of that information." Then, suddenly, two people were required to testify at the committee on justice policy, those two people being Peter Faist and of course Laura Miller. They had been asked to testify. Ironically, they said, "Yes. We're more than happy to testify."

Then, an election occurred. Of course, the results from our side weren't what we had hoped they would be. I have heard that this Liberal government has said to us several times, "We won, you lost. Get over it." I turn that around and I say, "Well, guess what, government? We lost, you won. You get over it"—get over that, in some cases, condescending attitude, one of arrogance, because they believe that in fact the people of Ontario had sent them back with a mandate, now that they have a majority government. It was for all the wrong reasons. Somewhere in that election—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Could you remove the prop, please, that the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has? Thanks so much.

Continue.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Speaker. I'll probably have to read Hansard now to find out where I was.

The point being that the government felt they had been given a mandate by the people of Ontario, but it was all for the wrong reasons. As a result of that, when you think about what had occurred in the election, it was all about 100,000 jobs as opposed to the true scandals and the money that this government has in fact cost the taxpayers of Ontario. That's the true issue.

What the committee on justice police wants to do—they want to finish the job. I agree with that. Let's finish

the job. They want to write a report. I agree with that. Write a report. But before you write that report, allow the two individuals, Ms. Laura Miller and Peter Faist, to come back and testify. That's what is needed. That's all they're asking, and then we will in fact be on the same page. Without being on the same page—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Quite the social butterflies today. Please keep it down. I can't even hear him. If you want to have a group discussion, go outside.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I don't want to have any backtalk, either.

Continue.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

I'd like to again bring to the House's attention and to those watching at home and perhaps in other places—this was from Hansard, dated September 11, 2013, when the leader of the third party asked a question to the Premier. The Premier's response to the question was: "I remain committed to being open and transparent on this issue. I have said that as there are questions that come forward, I want those questions to be answered. This is not about protection of anyone. It's about opening up the process...."

We've heard many, many times since we've been back in the 41st Parliament that the Premier is all about openness and transparency. If they really, truly believe those words, and if she's a woman of her word, then she will allow both those individuals, Peter Faist and Laura Miller, to testify at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved opposition day number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those against will please say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Order. Members, take your seats.

Mr. Yakabuski has moved opposition day motion number 1. All those in favour of the motion will please stand one at a time.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Singh, Jagmeet
Cimino, Joe	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	McDonnell, Jim	Vanhof, John
French, Jennifer K.	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff
Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick	
Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy	



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** All those opposed to the motion, please rise.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Anderson, Granville  
Baker, Yvan  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Ballard, Chris  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Del Duca, Steven

Gravelle, Michael  
Hoggarth, Ann  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hunter, Mitzie  
Jaczek, Helena  
Kiwala, Sophie  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Marie-France  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
Malhi, Harinder  
Mangat, Amrit  
Martins, Cristina

Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milczyn, Peter Z.  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Naidoo-Harris, Indira  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Oraziatti, David  
Potts, Arthur  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Sousa, Charles

Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dong, Han  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fraser, John

Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McGarry, Kathryn  
McMahon, Eleanor  
McMeekin, Ted

Takhar, Harinder S.  
Vernile, Daiene  
Wong, Soo  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**  
The ayes are 37; the nays are 53.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 6 o'clock, this House is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Mileczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones



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Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Peter Tabuns  
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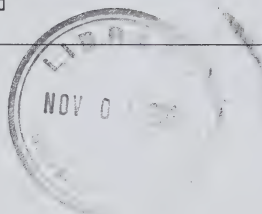
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of Ontario**

First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature

# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Thursday 30 October 2014**

**Jeudi 30 octobre 2014**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 30 October 2014

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 30 octobre 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning.

Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / *Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 29, I am now required to put the question: Mr. Bradley has moved second reading of Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no. All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote is required, pursuant to standing order 9(c). This vote is deferred until question period this morning.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

### PUBLIC SECTOR AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION ET LA TRANSPARENCE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / *Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** When this item of business was last debated, the member from Nepean-Carleton had the floor. I recognize the member from Nepean-Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It's my pleasure to re-engage in this debate on Bill 8, on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party as well as the official opposition, of which we are both. Again, I would like to say to my colleagues, particularly those who were not part of this debate yesterday, that the official opposition agrees with most of this bill—the premise of this bill. Obviously, we support increased accountability and transparency within the assembly as well as within the broader public service. We do have some concerns, however. I just want to simply reiterate those before I share my time with the member from Perth-Wellington, who is our government services critic and who I know will add a great deal to this debate.

I think we had an experience in the morning yesterday, when we talked about accountability and transparency, and then, later in the afternoon, transparency and accountability were defeated by the Liberal government when we decided, as an assembly, not to allow Peter Faist and Laura Miller to appear before the justice committee in order to allow that committee to complete its work. I know that was a major disappointment, not only for the official opposition but also for the third party, as we did stand up in union trying to increase accountability and transparency with respect to the two cancelled gas plants that cost taxpayers \$1.1 billion, all in the name of winning an election in the 2011 campaign.

I just wanted to point out that there have been a number of different pieces of legislation that have gone forward before in this assembly to bring increased and enhanced accountability and transparency, but they've been ignored. Again, the antidote to a crisis at OLG was a piece of legislation that did not prevent a crisis at eHealth. Then legislation came forward to prevent future eHealth-like scandals, and we got Ornge. Then there was another piece of legislation that was put in place to prevent scandals like Ornge, and we got the \$1.1-billion or \$1.2-billion gas plant scandal.



Again, we look at the fact that there has been legislation put before the House but it has been ignored by the government and various government agencies and departments. That, to me, says we can't legislate ethics; we actually have to set the bar higher. I think we could have set the bar higher yesterday, had we voted in unison to allow Faist and Miller to appear before the committee, but that did not happen. Only the official opposition and the third party supported that. So that's a concern.

I also wanted to point out, as a result of the cancelled gas plants and the alleged destruction of documents, that there had already been legislation in place to protect public archives and public record-keeping and that was ignored. So, simply adding another clause in this legislation isn't going to protect future records, because it was blatantly and flagrantly ignored.

I just have five points I want to raise before I pass on to remarks by my colleague Randy Pettapiece.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Please use the member's riding.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I am concerned about overlap and duplication. You know, nothing here has been costed. I think the government does owe it to the assembly as well as to members of the public to explain if there will be overlap, particularly between and among the officers of this assembly, and they must explain to us what that added cost is; not that anybody would begrudge a cost for increased accountability, but I think it would be the responsible thing to do.

I am concerned that some of the broader public sector services and agencies aren't designated in this legislation. I want to make sure that the LHINs, the CCACs and all of our hydro entities are included. The government has the onus now to do that. As I mentioned, we've had legislation in the past that should have addressed many of these scandals—this mismanagement—and it didn't, and that's a concern for me.

Also—and I raised this on a number of occasions—I actually think that if you're going to extend this piece of legislation, it must be amended to include all offices of the assembly that have staff, and must include the Speaker's office as well as the Clerk's office.

Finally, I think there is no reporting mechanism in place for those assembly members at this point in time. To leave it to regulation or to the Board of Internal Economy is one thing; actually to set it out in legislation and prescribe it, and give our constituents back home the comfort of knowing that this information will be available to them, where it will be available to them and when it will be available to them, is critical.

With that, it was a real pleasure to engage in this debate on behalf of the official opposition. The member from Perth–Wellington will ably and capably complete my hour's leadoff.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Perth–Wellington.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in this House and share time with my colleague from Nepean–Carleton.

I've been fortunate, in the short time I've been in the Legislature, to pass a couple of motions with all-party support. The first motion that I passed basically said that before a government introduces legislation or tries to pass legislation, think about it. Think about what the ramifications of that legislation are before you pass it. I can see that there are some flaws in this bill that we would certainly like to address, because I don't think the government completely took that to heart.

I'd like to read you a letter from the municipality I live in, the municipality of North Perth. It was sent to me by the mayor, Julie Behrns. She contacted me on behalf of the municipality of North Perth in regard to the creation of the new accountability measures as proposed by this government earlier this month. She's talking about the previous bill:

"We have read and understand what this new implementation would mean for us as a municipality and agree with what is trying to be achieved, but feel that it is not being approached in the appropriate manner.

"We as a municipality believe that we are already meeting the proposed expectations. North Perth currently has procedures in place that are effective in maintaining an accountable and transparent government. Implementing the proposed changes would be creating duplication of what we already have in place and would create an inefficient process with provincial oversight.

"As with many new initiatives, the financial implications of these new responsibilities are undetermined. Costs associated with the new accountability measures will almost certainly put a continuing strain back upon the municipalities and their citizens for these increasing financial and administrative responsibilities.

"We strongly encourage your government to consider the financial implications and administrative implications that these new accountability measures will have upon municipalities. A thorough review of existing practices within local government will ensure that you are aware of the existing methods municipalities use to ensure accountability and transparency in local government."

0910

Speaker, this is a well-written letter, and it certainly brings to light a couple of the concerns that the mayor of North Perth has with this bill.

After that, I wrote the Premier and asked her to give us a response to the mayor's letter. I haven't received one yet, and I sent this letter back in April. I'm disappointed that I haven't seen that yet.

I think it's rather rich of the government to introduce accountability measures to municipalities and different agencies within the government, especially after what happened yesterday, as my colleague from Nepean–Carleton said. We could have had the last witnesses to the gas plant testimony. However, you were here and you saw how that was voted down. What kind of message does this send to everybody else? "We want you to be accountable but we don't have to be." I think that's a clear message that has been sent to municipalities and people in Ontario after what happened yesterday.

These two witnesses could have, may have, shed some light on what transpired with the alleged cancelling of emails in what we call the gas plant scandal. However, they have been denied that, and the committee has been denied that right to question them, because of the events of yesterday. I think it's short-sighted on the government's part not to do this. I think I can understand why they're doing it: They just don't want to hear the testimony, because it could be more damaging to their reputation. However, for the sake of democracy, we should have had that opportunity.

There's another letter here that I have, Speaker, that I'd like to read into the record. It comes from the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command, veterans services chairman, in response to this bill. Part of it includes a patient ombudsman for hospitals and long-term-care homes.

"This patient ombudsman has been a long time coming, and one which we as a provincial committee have been pushing for. The ombudsman needs to have teeth for any vulnerable Ontarians." This is from Derek Moore, who is district C commander of the Royal Canadian Legion. He says, "We feel that the patient ombudsman is unsatisfactory because the PO reports to the minister, not the Legislature." And they hope the government will make some comments on this the next time we sit in the Legislature. He feels that needs to be corrected.

I think that's a really good point. Certainly, if the ombudsman reported to the Legislature, we'd get access to his comments a lot faster than if it sits on a minister's desk and isn't brought forward.

The duplication of measures in this legislation does nothing but cost money. And this is something that the minister has failed to do: There are no costs involved here, no estimate of costs that are going to be passed on to taxpayers or to municipalities with the implementation of this bill. This is a real concern. Being a municipal councillor in North Perth, I saw many instances of government regulations that came down without any consultations with municipalities, and all of a sudden there's a cost that's involved. The municipality is caught flat-footed, but the province says that you must do these things, and costs are attributed to it with no help from the government that is ordering any of these changes. Again, I get back to my resolution that you should think of the ramifications of anything you do in this place and what effect it's going to have in Ontario. Some of these issues haven't been fully explained: certainly, the one about cost implications and one of the concerns that the mayor of North Perth had, the duplication of services.

In North Perth, if we had any issues with what we could and couldn't do, we would ask the clerk. We had a process in place. The clerk would advise us as to whether we should be talking about something or whether we should go in camera, things like this. It worked very well. I know for a fact that if I had any doubts about whether I should be sitting there debating something in council, if I had any doubts at all, I would either ask her or I would leave the proceedings, because what I used to go by was, "When in doubt, get out." That's what I used to do.

So now this government has decided, with no consultation with many of these agencies and many of these places, that they know best, even though municipalities have taken it upon themselves to put some of these rules in place in order that they may more effectively govern their municipalities.

Costs are a thing that municipalities are having real issues with these days, because they only have one source of money, which is the taxes that they charge their ratepayers, property taxes. So it's difficult. They have very limited ways of raising money. Most of their services that they supply are cost-recovery, such as their sewer systems or lights. It's nice to make a little bit of money on these things, but most of it is more of a cost-recovery thing. So when a government comes with a piece of legislation that can have monetary ramifications to the municipality, where are they supposed to get the extra money? It's always an issue, which I saw many times when I was a councillor with the municipality of North Perth.

You know, I watched the World Series ball game last night. It kind of reminded me of what a government should work like. When you're out playing ball on the field, you're out there in front of everybody; everybody sees what you're doing. You see the strategy. If you don't catch the ball, you're not going to have the chance to make an out. If you don't hit the ball, you're not going to get a chance to get a run. It's just as simple as that. I think legislators should look at this type of thing. We must be open and upfront with those who we represent, certainly from our ridings and those in Ontario. This is what we saw last night. We saw a pitchers' duel. If the pitcher doesn't put that ball where it's going to go, somebody's going to hit it out of the park. It's just an honest way of watching a sport, an honest way of playing a sport.

I think that's something that we need to get back to in this Legislature, in that we need to consult, we need to manage, but with the partnership of those lower-tier governments that we have an effect on. We must get their expertise, their comments, before implementing legislation that does have an effect on them. That not only gives them a chance to further input; it certainly builds up a sense of trust that the upper-tier and lower-tier governments can grow as we move forward.

**0920**

I also wrote the Premier another letter concerning this very issue back in April, which I haven't received a response to, but it basically says the same thing: that there are some real concerns in Ontario on this bill. They would have loved to have had consultation on it before things were done. We understand that this bill will get to committee. We hope that the committees will listen to our points and take them to heart, because with what has happened here in the last number of years—I've only been here three years, but I've seen a lot of history in this place in those three years. Certainly, a lot of it is not good, having to do with the gas plants and Ornge; and with what happened the other day with not letting these



two witnesses come to testify. That helps breed distrust within the municipalities, and our ratepayers and taxpayers of Ontario, with the provincial government.

So whenever we bring legislation to this House, it's just fair that there should be some consultation to see if the legislation is even needed. I'm certain that you can look through this and see that there are parts of it that aren't needed. There are parts that maybe just go a little too far, as was outlined by the mayor of North Perth.

I was interested in some of the comments that my colleague from Nepean—Carleton had, having to do with the ongoing OPP investigations. As I understand, it's the first time that has happened in this Legislature, that I'm aware of. I stand to be corrected if that's not true. Now there are two investigations and not just one. Unfortunately, the OPP are not able to call the witnesses that we're interested in, and that's really too bad.

This legislation covers an enormous amount of ABCs—agencies, boards and commissions—plus municipal interests. Cancer Care Ontario is one of them; eHealth or whatever has been cited in some of these investigations, that we need to have a harder look. The government is proposing that this legislation would make things more transparent and make these agencies more accountable in their dealings with government and with the public.

I would suggest that this is a piece of legislation that tries to deflect some of the criticism of this government over the past years—starting as far back as 10 years ago, when the eHealth scandal first came out—trying to get people to forget some of these things. The government is trying to put themselves in a better light, in that they want to tell the public or try to convince the public that what they're doing is an act of trying to instill that trust back into their government and into what they do. But when you start deflecting things, there are sometimes things that reflect back on you. For every action, you know, there's an equal and opposite reaction. I think the taxpayers of Ontario can see through this, and will see through some of these things in this legislation and have serious thoughts as to exactly what this government is trying to do in deflecting criticism from them, in that they claim to be more transparent and accountable.

I believe one of the ways to instill that trust and to help create a better partnership between government and lower-tier governments and certainly the people of Ontario is that when you ask questions to find out just exactly what happened, whether it be the dealings of the government or anything else, be fair and stand up and give answers if you can.

I know that the committee, especially on this gas plant thing, has been going on forever—a long, long time. But it's because of a lot of government stalling, delays and getting documents that were asked for. Estimates of the cancellations, the dollar values were certainly way out of line of what actually happened, what it actually cost us. It was a long time before that was brought out. The government was kicking and screaming over releasing those figures, and finally, it was done.

Thousands and thousands of documents were finally released. At times they said they had released all the documents, and then we would find out that they hadn't. Certainly, matters of contempt to Parliament were dealt with. So it has been quite the three years with some of these things.

Now, as I've said before, this process is going to be cut short because the government doesn't feel it needs to hear from any more witnesses although the two that we're interested in should have an opportunity to testify. If they had no dealings with what has been alleged to have happened with the deleted emails, then at least they should have an opportunity to clear their names. That's not going happen now.

It's interesting that whenever this side of the House, our party, says something that rubs a raw bone with the government, they always refer to history that's 20 or 30 years ago and start talking about that. Well, we're not talking about 20 or 30 years ago; we're talking about current history and things that need to be looked at.

It's frustrating for me. I get asked in my riding, when I go to events, about what is going on down there, because people want answers. I just have to say to them that it has been a frustrating process getting answers from this government, especially now, since they want to go to report writing with this committee and not let us complete our work.

I think members of our party have done a fantastic job on these committees, especially this one, to bring out a lot of the truth as to what happened and how much it cost Ontario's taxpayers. Certainly, without the efforts of our party and others, this wouldn't have happened. It would have just gone by the wayside without any sense of accountability from this present government.

I think I'll get back to the bill. The reason I'm talking about these things is because the bill is framed to deflect criticism from this government on some of the things that have happened in recent history. But the issue is, it's putting more impetus on municipalities and other agencies that have been trying to do a good job and have things that they want to accomplish—such as the Legion, when I talked about the ombudsman. The government wants to give a sign that they are trying to do things right, which we know that they've had problems with in the past, to deflect criticism of their government.

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I think we've all been brought up to believe, and it's been instilled in us, that maybe telling the truth is the better way of doing things. You probably won't get in as much trouble than if you're caught not telling the truth. I was probably punished worse if I was caught in a lie by my parents, and deservedly so. I think that's something that governments have to understand: Fess up to what you've done and get on with life instead of dragging things out and then coming up with bills like this that try to—"Let's go over here a little bit, and maybe people will forget some of the things that we've done in the past."

Being open and transparent—I keep hearing this all the time from the other side of the House. You see it in

the newspapers. I don't know how many times that has been repeated and repeated and repeated. But I guess the definition of that varies depending on who you are, because we don't see that today in some of the dealings with this government. We've asked for the whole story on the MaRS project that they decided to get involved with. We don't have that story yet. We'd certainly like to see it, because I would suspect that there are some things that have happened there that give us cause for concern.

This bill will go to committee. I would hope that the government listens to all of our concerns on it, and also the concerns that I've read into the record from the mayor of North Perth and the Legion. Listen to it. Let's debate those things, let's talk them over, because with any legislation—certainly with this one, as you can see, there are some things in it that I believe weren't well thought out, that need to be addressed. Address the concerns of those who have taken the time to not only write to me but I'm sure have written to some of our other colleagues about their concerns, too. So I would hope that the government will allow us to bring these to committee, and that we can make the changes that we feel are necessary. I believe when the committee looks at them, all parties would probably agree with a lot of the things that I've spoken about this morning and that my colleagues have spoken about, too.

Speaker, I think I'm going to finish up right now. I thank you for the time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I want to thank the members for Nepean–Carleton and Perth–Wellington for their comments on this bill. I know that our member from Kitchener–Waterloo will be doing the lead for us on this bill and will have some of the same concerns but many more as well. New Democrats certainly have some immediate concerns that jump out in this bill, particularly in the case that it is an omnibus bill. That's a hard word to say.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's ominous.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Yes, it's an ominous bill. That's what I wanted to say.

For me, being a nurse and working in the health care field for almost 40 years, my concern is, why is an important change to health care embedded in this bill, with I don't know how many other schedules?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Eleven.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Eleven other schedules. The government, over the past week and a half, two weeks, has been time-allocating many of the bills that have been before us, some after just very few hours of debate. Here we have a bill with 11 schedules, with some very important issues in it, and I'm hoping that we're not going to hear by the end of today or Monday that they're going to be time-allocating this as well.

I think one of the most important pieces in this bill is around health care. Here we have a government that's talking about being open and transparent. We have an Ombudsman who has oversight for many public agencies in this province. And now they're putting in a patient

ombudsman—when we have somebody with expertise to investigate complaints across this province—with very limited powers and oversight ability.

We're going to want to debate that schedule in particular, as well as the entire bill, for as many hours as we possibly can.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to stand in support of Bill 8. It's a comprehensive bill. I'm particularly proud of it because a piece of legislation that I put forward in the last session—transparency in members' expenses—is included in that. I put forward that piece of legislation because I believe that if we're going to ask other people to do things, we should be able to do them ourselves and lead by example.

In researching my bill, I spent some time on the Internet and I found some other bills. One bill that I found was coined the Truth in Government Act, and the member from Nepean–Carleton would be familiar with it because it's her bill. It's a great bill in terms of—it took some work to get into it, to get it done. It's not as comprehensive as this bill, but some of the principles are in there. I was quite excited when I looked at the bill, and I thought, "Here's something I can use, and I'll be able to get some support."

Then, upon reading the bill—you've got to read the bill—what I found was that in the section about expenses, everybody in government was included except for us. So the Truth in Government Act applied to everybody except for the members of this assembly and, in fact, this building. I know that the member—because I heard her this morning and I spoke to her yesterday—is in full support of us doing that now, and I congratulate her for that. I look forward, as we continue to debate this bill—that we support that principle, that anything that we ask other people to do, we do ourselves.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to add some comments on Bill 8 and respond to the leadoff speech from our member from Nepean–Carleton and also the member from Perth–Wellington.

The member from Perth–Wellington was raising some grassroots concerns from his riding, which I think is an important thing to do. He read some letters with very specific concerns from some of the municipalities in his riding that probably had a close look at this bill. I certainly hope that the government listens to those grassroots concerns that have been raised and that they get an opportunity to perhaps make some amendments to the bill at committee.

I also note that in this Bill 8, there's one entire section, schedule 2, which has to do with air ambulance. I suspect that is coming from some of the problems that Ontario has had with its air ambulance system in recent years; as we know, that's known as Ornge.

So I'm pleased to see some changes there and also pleased to learn that the almost-final report of the public



accounts committee is going to be tabled in the Legislature today. I had the pleasure of sitting on public accounts for two years, and I'm really pleased that that report is going to be tabled, apparently later on today, because there was a lot of work from all members on all sides of the Legislature that went into that committee report. I think there's a lot to learn from that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

0940

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'm pleased to stand up this morning and speak to Bill 8 and weigh in on some of the comments that were made by the member from Nepean–Carleton.

I very much agreed with the member when she said that this bill was a response to some of the scandals that we've seen with this government with regard to Ornge, eHealth, gas plants, OPP investigations and the deletion of emails. I very much believe that this bill is an attempt by this government to tilt the public perception away from that which the public presently has of the Wynne government, from the 10-plus years of unaccountable Liberal government that we've seen, whether it was under Wynne or McGuinty.

The NDP does support greater accountability and transparency in government, but after reviewing these many schedules, these 11 schedules that are contained in this bill, it's very clear that these schedules are not effective. They're insufficient, they're entirely misguided and, in some cases, they are just self-serving.

One comment that the member from Nepean–Carleton made that I think bears repeating is that you can't legislate ethics. I know that's a comment that has been made by other members in this House. It's very much the truth; it's very much the case. The fact is that this government stood watch over the numerous scandals, those scandals that I've just mentioned. They were aware, in many cases, that these scandals were happening, and yet they didn't have the will to act. So despite the possibly good intentions of this particular bill, the tools and measures that are contained in this bill will not compensate for the lack of will. That's the real problem here: We can put all the pieces of legislation that we want in place to try to regulate good behaviour and good ethics, but it really takes a will on the part of the government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I recognize the member for Nepean–Carleton: two minutes for a response.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thanks to all those who engaged in debate today. I think this has actually been a positive experience for us in this assembly, which is not always the case.

I'd like to say thanks to my colleague from Perth–Wellington for bringing his perspective in our shared leadoff time. I really did appreciate this.

Again, Bill 8 is something that we, in principle, support. We agree with most of the legislation. But again, I just want to reiterate that we are concerned that transparency and accountability have been ignored by this gov-

ernment. It was ignored yesterday with an opposition motion to get Faist and Miller into committee. I also believe they're failing in another bill, Bill 10, with respect to child care workers across the province. Again, if they want to be open and transparent, they should allow that bill to travel across the province.

I thought my colleague from Welland had a great point on health care. I didn't talk a lot about it, but the patient ombudsman is going to be a significant piece of concern. If we're talking about transparency and accountability, sending—a piece of this legislation that has to do solely with our health care system is a very important point. I appreciate her bringing that up, because, yes, this is an omnibus bill. There is an opportunity and a potential that many of the legislative officers of the assembly will overlap, and that may create duplication as well.

Finally, I'm very concerned about the designation. Not all of the broader public service is designated, and I'm concerned that not all of the assembly is going to be included in this bill and there aren't sufficient reporting mechanisms.

I wanted to say thanks to the member from Ottawa South for bringing up the Truth in Government Act that I brought forward, I think it was two Parliaments ago—and understanding that his bill, although I also congratulate him for bringing something forward, also did not go far enough, nor does this bill with respect to that.

Thank you to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, talking about the need for amendments.

To the member from Kenora–Rainy River, I really want to say thank you for reiterating the response to my speech. But I also want to say congratulations to you. I haven't had the opportunity to do that. I know you're going into a different phase of your life, and I want to congratulate you on behalf of all members of the assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to be the lead on Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014.

This is a really interesting piece of legislation. In many respects it's looking to address some of the long-standing issues that this Liberal government has had. But it also is very crafty, if you will, and the title is somewhat deceptive.

It certainly is challenging because there are some things that are contained within this piece of legislation which New Democrats have been strong supporters of around accountability, and yet it's weighted down by legislation which does not address the key issues that are facing the people of this province. The entire nature of it is very interesting. There are 11 schedules contained within this piece of legislation, many of them disjointed, and many of them when you scratch the surface, you get a little more surface. We have some serious concerns.

I'm going to focus a lot of my comments primarily on what I'm regarding as the imaginary patient ombudsman and the fictional broader public sector executive salary

caps. These are key issues because we have a history as a party, our leader in particular, of bringing these issues to this place. They're embedded in Bill 8 and don't address the key issues that we have found.

Also, this entire piece of legislation is looking to address what is essentially a public relations problem for the Liberal government. As you will know, prior to the election, there were serious trust issues. Those trust issues have continued. So this legislation is an attempt to reshape that party and to reintroduce this party and this government to the people of this province. I will maintain that the people of this province will not be believing that public relations campaign.

It's our job, actually, as the third party, to be very clear with the people of this province why the title of this act is a great title, obviously. Who doesn't care about accountability and transparency? Language is so important when you're crafting legislation. But actions speak louder than words.

A few examples just to bring that point home: The mandate letters have been distributed, and it was a very public process. But mandate letters are only valuable to the public if they're actionable. When you have a Minister of Labour, for instance, who has a mandate letter which does not address working at heights and mandatory training, or does not address the long-standing issue of lack of regulation around swing stages—if you have a mandate letter which actually doesn't address key safety issues in the construction industry, then it's not worth that much.

Certainly, with the Treasury Board, for instance, their mandate letter calls for reviewing IT in the province of Ontario with the Ontario public service. Yet yesterday the minister stood up and said, "You know what? We don't have a problem." Well, how can you do a review of IT when privatization, the private sector, is claiming 63% of the work in this province—and not admit that that's a problem? You're not going to solve a problem if you don't admit that there's a problem. So I found that incredibly interesting.

I think that the theme, if you will, that the government is trying to push forward—push that agenda forward—around openness and transparency is incredibly important; it is. People don't trust politicians. People have seen the track record of this Liberal government. They have outstanding questions, for sure.

Language is really important within this context as well. In the Ed Clark report that came out, he uses language like "unshackling" and "unlocking." I think of "unravelling" when I read that report. Certainly someone has a thesaurus because there's new language that is being introduced by this government to, in our opinion, push this forward and accelerate the privatization agenda, which actually doesn't serve the people of this province.

Again, on openness and transparency, we continue to ask for clarity. That's our job. We are here to represent the people of this province. When there's a lack of clarity on certain issues, we stand in this House, and we ask good questions.

For instance, last week, on the Pan Am Games, we found that the government, in their request for proposals process for security for Pan Am, has embedded an element of sponsorship. They're asking those companies that are bidding for security on the Pan Am Games, which we all want to be successful—those RFPs are calling for and giving weight to sponsorship. So if those companies give cash or gifts in kind or marketing services, they get bumped up the line to win the contract.

**0950**

It can't just be me who has a concern about this. If you want quality services, especially around security—what could be more important? The minister has said that you can't put a price tag on security for the Pan Am Games. But you can tie it to an RFP if you want that contract. There's a word for that. The federal Liberals ran into a sponsorship scandal not that long ago; it's in our recent history. If you were enticing a company to give you cash to get a contract, some people might actually call that a kickback. They actually might. We have some outstanding concerns as to how these contracts are being—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask you to withdraw.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Withdraw.

Again, on openness and transparency: Every day we come to this House. We ask good questions on how contracts are awarded. We ask good questions on who is lobbying this government. We have outstanding concerns on, certainly, the key issues that this act is supposed to address, and I'll get to those right now.

The issue of broader public sector executives: This is under schedule 1. It looks to, in many forms, try to establish some ceilings on public sector CEO salaries. However, it doesn't actually put a cap. You can't say that this piece of legislation is truly going to be effective. You can't say that it's actually going to get those public sector salaries under control. The bill does not include actual public sector CEO salary caps. There's only info gathering and authority to negotiate a future framework for developing future regulations that might one day include an actual CEO cap—or not.

Now, we as a party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, had brought forward Bill 57 back in 2010. The government at the time opposed this legislation. Bill 57 called for a hard cap of \$418,000. The government at the time said no. They wouldn't support it. They thought that it was unreasonable to put a cap on public sector salaries. Bill 57 should be the starting point for amending this schedule. It should be clear that, obviously, there are some exceptions around this cap, but if you don't set a hard cap, you won't reach that goal.

Certainly, we have seen some examples of outrageous salaries and payouts for certain people in the public sector; the CEO for the Pan/Parapan Am Games, for instance. The salary, as a starting point, was exorbitant. It was shocking for the people of this province to see that salary in print. It was even more shocking to see how much he was awarded after, quite honestly, leaving the job—I think he was asked to leave—because there were



some quality issues. There was a quality service piece. Then, of course, there was a huge payout. I mean, who needs a job when you can get a payout like that, you know?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** "The day I won the lottery."

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes. You don't go crying home when you get a payout of almost \$480,000. It was a huge payout. Quite honestly, it was a huge insult to the people of this province, because there are people on the front line in the health care sector, the personal support workers who've been promised an increase—it is not flowing to all PSWs—a primarily female-dominated field. The early childhood educators who do amazing work across this province—what is more important than caring for a child and being part of their early learning and care experience? They are some of the lowest-paid people in this province, and the money that was promised in the election is not flowing, either.

The concept that this piece of legislation is going to get those salaries under control, is going to provide any true oversight in the executive form of public sector workers, is just not happening. In fact, even last week—actually, it was just earlier this week; it's been a long week—we had a day where we had a session, actually, around privatization in the province of Ontario. The government is going through the motions around accountability, yet when we follow the money on the IT file—that's where we are right now; there'll be a new file next week and there'll be another file the next week after that. But when you follow the money, the 63% increase in the private sector being awarded work that public service IT-qualified professionals should be doing, at a huge cost, \$703 million—there's no excuse for that. There absolutely is no excuse.

We found you \$200 million. You need \$200 million if you want to follow through on some of those promises. The promises that we would prioritize, of course, are the PSWs and ECEs, because those are key jobs in the province of Ontario around caring for people.

The other issue is on schedule 5, and that's the patient ombudsman, and this is not negotiable. This is a non-negotiable issue, because in health care, there are some serious ethical issues happening in our long-term-care facilities and in an emerging, growing field of private medical clinics. We have long advocated for full oversight of the health sector by an independent provincial Ombudsman, which is already allowed in every other province.

If you pay attention to the health care file, and it's hard not to—I mean, we just had some folks here yesterday sharing their stories around the emerging and growing field of medical tourism. This is a huge ethical issue for this province. The RNAO was here, the Ontario Midwives, the Canadian doctors, and they raised the flag on 12 hospitals in the city of Toronto that are marketing and soliciting patients from other countries to come here, to bump people down the wait-list for surgery and certain procedures—birth tourism is a growing field; that's something that we should not be proud of in the province of Ontario—and there's a cost.

People think that you can generate revenue through medical tourism, but actually what happens, and this was really interesting, is that when you bump less affluent and more sick people down the wait-list, they get sicker, and because they get sicker, those costs rise. While it looks like you get a short-term burst of funding—because we all know that there are some funding issues on the medical front—you actually end up losing money, and the duality of the health care system is, again, privatization by stealth, which seems to be the agenda. That's not accountable, and that's not transparent, so we called the government on this.

The medical tourism issue: This patient ombudsman wouldn't be able to look into this issue. There are so many limitations to this role in the province of Ontario. I think it's very clear, I just want to say from the outset, that the government oversold this bill, and now they're trying to push it forward. They oversold it because they have this internal conflict, if you will. Half the time, they are trying to take credit for the things that the government has done since 2003, and then, the rest of the time, they're trying to distance themselves from the scandals, the mismanagement of the previous government.

There is going to be a day of reckoning. You can't have it both ways; you were either part of the government that mismanaged Ornge and eHealth and gas plants and now MaRS and soon-to-be Pan Am, coming soon to a scandal-ridden paper near you—you can't have it both ways, and this piece of legislation is not going to fix it. I know that you want it to fix it, but maybe it can't be fixed. You could pull some of the schedules out of this huge piece of legislation. You could do that; I doubt that you will, though.

Back to the patient ombudsman: This does amend the Excellent Care for All Act to establish a new patient ombudsman with very limited powers to resolve and investigate complaints from patients and former patients of hospitals, CCACs and long-term-care homes. That should keep a patient ombudsman very busy. It does not, of course, address private clinics and retirement homes.

#### 1000

The private clinic piece, though, is really concerning for us, because we have seen an emerging and growing trend around privatization on the health care front, and we're tracking it very carefully. Our health critic is on this file very closely. For instance, just to give you an example, if you were a patient and you were at one of those new private clinics—I call them Scopes "R" Us—and there was a medical mishap, which actually the research and the evidence have shown happens more so in private clinics. As a patient, you could contact the ombudsman. As a former patient, you might be able to go back and contact the ombudsman. However, if something went really wrong and you weren't able to raise a concern, a family member couldn't do it, I couldn't raise the concern with the ombudsman as an MPP—I would be limited based on the scope of this role—and the ombudsman could only investigate actions or inactions, not decisions.

For instance, if I had a parent in a retirement home and something happened, like respite care was denied, they couldn't do anything because it's a retirement home, and we all know that there are serious, serious issues in retirement homes. We go full circle in this world. Just as children are vulnerable, so are senior citizens—incredibly vulnerable.

Say, for instance, the CCAC decided to end respite care for a parent. The ombudsman could not do anything about this until the action was followed through, so until the care was denied, and then the medical issue either worsened or became more serious. There's no prevention here. It's just not smart legislation.

The Premier has said that we need to have a culture of wellness in this province, but the patient ombudsman can only investigate after things go really wrong, and the patient only can institute that. Obviously, if someone is getting respite care and they're elderly, they may not be in a position to reach out to the ombudsman because they've been denied respite care. Their health situation may be so serious that they can't do it.

So it leaves out MPPs and family members as advocates for patients. The patient ombudsman has incredibly constrained oversight. They are not independent. They report to the minister who—in their mandate letter, there's no mention of shifting the focus of health care to prevention, which would save the province a lot of money.

The term of reference for the ombudsman is also in play. What I mean by this is that, for instance, if the ombudsman was incredibly critical of the minister, of health care policy or of the government of the day, regardless of who it is, their term is not set.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** It will be like Ian Troop.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes, I know. "Out you go. We don't like you. You're too critical." They could very easily lessen the term that the ombudsman was serving.

We need somebody in the province of Ontario who has comprehensive oversight over health care. This is not this person. Even if the ombudsman got a complaint about a hospital or a CCAC's distribution of health care, they would have to call the hospital first and say, "Hey, I've heard some really bad things about the services you're delivering. I'm giving you notice that I'm going to come over there and check it out."

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** "Is that okay?"

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes, "Is that okay with you?" Does this sound like something that is effective? It's actually not. It's not effective at all.

A patient ombudsman, the way that it's crafted in Bill 8, is non-negotiable for us. A patient ombudsman—the powers that be that are outlined in this piece of legislation are inadequate. It does not extend the proper oversight to the health care sector.

Obviously, as I've said, we have a long and proud history of supporting the concept of having a provincial Ombudsman who is independent and who has the powers to actually make a difference. Why bring this in if this ombudsman does not have the power to truly protect people in the health care system? If you haven't been paying attention, the issues that are ongoing in our

retirement homes are incredibly concerning. We have parents and their children. The children are trying to be strong advocates for that parent in that retirement home. Particularly in for-profit retirement homes, the retirement homes nickel and dime the services: one bath a week, not adequate hygiene or feeding. So when these children actually advocate for their parents—imagine how hard it is to see your parent be denied quality care, when you have no other options, in a for-profit setting, because profit drives the agenda in a for-profit retirement home.

At the end of the day, the company that is running that retirement home has excluded the child, has prevented and barred the child from entering the retirement home, because they don't like what they are hearing. They don't like that this client has someone who's saying, "You know what? My parent needs proper nutrition. Nutrition is a key part in elder care," or "My parent is not being cared for in the way that you promised." The patient ombudsman would have no rights or powers to intervene in this situation.

So I think it's safe to say it is ineffective. It does not address the key issues that we have brought forward. Quite honestly, you really have to question why you've brought it forward in the first place. And you've embedded it in an omnibus piece of legislation. When I think of omnibus legislation, I have to say that it's not positive. Quite honestly, I associate it with the Prime Minister and the federal Conservatives, because they have become quite adept at ramming pieces of legislation through under the cloak of some progressive ideas. In turn, there's a lot of unintended consequences that happen because of that.

The record that the Liberal government has thus far—I mean, it's a new term. It's early days, but we've already seen excessive use of time allocation, which limits debate, which limits our democracy, which compromises our ability to represent the constituents, which limits our powers as MPPs to bring concerns forward and speak on the part of the people who did elect us. Limiting our voices in a democracy was something on which the Premier said very clearly, "That's not going to happen. We're going to listen. We're going to be respectful." I believe, actually, she said, "It's important for us to appear to care about the other parties." People don't like arrogant politicians. They don't like arrogant governments. They're stuck with us for four years, or stuck with you for four years. If this is the new culture of a majority government, it does not help the lack of confidence and belief that politicians, in particular, are here for the right reasons.

As I pointed out, you have some serious issues that you're facing on transit and gridlock. We have been able to find you some savings through the Treasury Board, and those were clearly communicated in a very public way, and yet those savings were denied. This is really concerning for us, because we see a lack of respect or a lack of willingness to even work with us when we can all be part of the solution, quite honestly.

So this piece of legislation, as it stands—I think I'm going to be running out of time very soon, but I'll be coming back to a couple of other themes when I return.



To be clear, schedule 1 doesn't set caps for executive pay, so it doesn't address a key issue that the people of this province have communicated to us.

The amendments to the Ambulance Act would not have prevented the problems at Ornge. That will be a topic for another day, because it's such a huge issue and outstanding.

The Ombudsman is gaining access to municipalities, universities and school boards, but is not granted comprehensive oversight over the health care sector, which is the largest budgetary item in the finances of this province and so deserves greater attention and greater power. As I've mentioned, the patient ombudsman will have limited powers and is far less effective than extending independent Ombudsman oversight to the entire health care sector.

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I didn't get a chance to address the children's advocate, which is being granted new investigative functions—but these are seriously curtailed by parameters that effectively prevent the practical application of these functions. So when I get a chance to return, I'll be talking at length about the children's advocate. There are long-standing issues in this province. I remember when Judy Rebick, actually, was the child advocate. She was trying to ensure that parents didn't have to give up their children. If their children had developmental issues and the parents were unable to care for them—the government of the day happened to be the PCs—they would have to give their children up to the authorities, to children's aid, because they were in a position to not fulfill their responsibilities for financial reasons, because of a lack of resources. The government of the day limited her powers to access the Queen's Printer here, because they didn't want her to message out how bad the situation was. They didn't want the children's advocate to be critical of the government of the day.

The theme does continue to this government, as well, because we have seen cuts to CAS funding. We have seen a reduction in special education funding across the province—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Not true.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Actually, that is very true. We have seen children in private child care centres—we've seen this government turn a blind eye to the complaints that have come from that sector. Unfortunately, the piece of legislation in play does not really address the serious and outstanding concerns on the child care front as well.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** We've seen people drop off their autistic kids because there's no funding.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes, I know. The issue that the former child advocate dealt with almost 15 years ago still continues today. We still have parents who are in a position with their adult children, whether it's autism or physical disabilities—they've aged. I can't imagine how hard it is, but they have to give up their rights as parents, in many respects, to ensure that their adult children are properly cared for.

Obviously, we are going to put forward a lot of amendments. It's a huge amount of work to do. It doesn't

need to be this way. It could be more simple and direct. But for some reason, this government has packaged it all up under the guise of openness and transparency. Your actions are speaking louder than this piece of legislation and the title of this legislation.

When I do get a chance to come back and delve a little bit further into the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, I will be addressing the fact that the advocate of the day has long sought the same ability to investigate matters that pertain to their mandate—children and youth receiving services from government—as all of the other provincial child advocate offices currently have. Ontario needs to catch up. It needs to catch up on the patient ombudsman, on the child advocate and, certainly, on accountability.

We have no problems whatsoever exposing our expenses. Our lives are very public as it stands right now. But it makes no sense to embed all of these schedules together when those key issues around accountability and transparency need to be addressed.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** How about lobbyists?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I haven't even gotten to the lobbyists because it's a little close to home for me. But I will say, though, that I don't understand why this government thinks it's appropriate to have just one year. In particular, the former Premier: One year out, and he's lobbying for a company in Waterloo. That's just incredible, just one year. The federal government thinks that five years is an acceptable amount of time. I think the optics and the perception are actually very important.

Clearly, as I pointed out, the government is looking at this piece of legislation to change the channel on who they are and what their record is. We do not find several of these schedules contained within Bill 8 to be effective or to be efficient. So we call into question the entire intent of this piece of legislation, and we're calling you out on it because the openness and transparency which you've promised the people, you are not delivering on.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** It gives me great pleasure to welcome three members of my constituency staff who are joining us in the Legislature today: John Critsotakis, George Bancroft and Arianne Persaud. Let's welcome them to the Legislature.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I am very pleased to welcome two guests from my riding today, Terry and Barbara Parker. Santa—I mean Terry—is here to go over my Christmas wish list today.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming my colleague from my constituency office, Sharmine Hassani, sitting in the members' gallery,

and also Golbon Moltaji, a PhD student at the University of Ottawa institute for Canadian studies. Please join me in welcoming both of them to the House today.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** We have in the public gallery Jennifer Van Boekel and Mike Van Boekel, the parents of one of the best two pages in the Legislature, Greg Van Boekel.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Please help me in welcoming my constituent sitting in the members' east gallery: Cleve Mortelliti, recently acclaimed as councillor in ward 1, township of King.

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** On behalf of Minister Michael Chan, I'd like to welcome page captain Raveen's family here today from Markham—Unionville: his mother, Jasvir Singh; his father, Gurmeet Singh; his sister Rhea Singh; his grandmother Manjit Singh; and his grandfather Surinder Singh. Thank you for visiting.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I wanted to welcome my brother Chris McDonell, mayor of North Glengarry, who's here for question period today.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Sitting beside Cleve Mortelliti from King township is my brother Ed Ballard, his good friend.

I also have another introduction to make today. The parents of our page captain Meher Kapoor from Aurora are here: her mom, Mamta Bali-Kapoor; her father, Rajan Kapoor; and her brother Rohan Kapoor. Welcome.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I would like to introduce Mr. Eduardo Harari, who is here as a guest today. He will be participating in the reception I'll be holding this evening and is here for the second reading of my bill this afternoon. Welcome, Eduardo.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** My friends, we have with us today, in the Speaker's gallery, Nazifa Langaryan, the first-ever female consul general of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Toronto. Welcome.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Ontario was once a thriving location for investment, attracting companies from across the globe and driving our economy. Specifically, Ontario was proud to be a world leader in the mining industry. Just over a decade ago, under the previous government, we were the top mining jurisdiction in the world: number one. Now we're number 28.

Every year, my colleagues and I meet with the Ontario Mining Association, and every year they have the same issues with your government. Ontario mining companies are faced with some of the highest energy costs in North America, the highest worker safety premiums in Canada, a massive infrastructure deficit and tax instability.

Minister, what are you doing to address the high energy rates that are making it difficult—very difficult—for mining companies to continue to invest in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's unfortunate that the opposition party continues to run down Ontario's economy. In fact, Speaker, we've made some important progress in our recovery from the recession, the global recession.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The comments today prod me to say that I will interject on those who interject while the answer is being given on that side, and I will ensure that we get this done quickly and effectively with your co-operation.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker.

I know that the minister is going to want to respond specifically to mining. I know the opposition will want to celebrate the progress that we've made. We've gone from an all-time high unemployment rate of 9.4% down to 7.1%—still too high, but moving in the right direction. We've added 723,000 more jobs, and last year employment in Ontario increased by 100,000. We're moving in the right direction. The opposition party should stop running down Ontario and celebrate our progress.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I say to the honourable member, it's hard to believe anybody could run the province further into the ground than your government has already done. It's the 93rd consecutive month in a row that this province, which used to be the economic engine of Canada, has had an unemployment rate above the national average. Shame on you—dead last in Canada for jobs.

Talking about the mining industry again, Dalton McGuinty told us that he was going to fix the mining industry with the work around the Ring of Fire. He was going to "garner billions of dollars of new investment and thousands of new jobs." We know that nothing is happening around the Ring of Fire. The mining industry itself tells us that you've set us a shell economic corporation that doesn't do anything. There's not even anyone there to really talk about the needs of the industry.

In fact, in a Globe and Mail article recently, talking about the Ring of Fire, Cliffs chief executive Lourenco Goncalves said: "I don't believe under my watch, and I plan to stay [alive] for the next 50 years ... that the Ring of Fire will be developed."

Once again, Minister, I didn't get an answer. What are you doing to bring down these industrial hydro rates that are driving jobs out of this province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Speaking specifically about energy rates, we certainly recognize what a cost that is to the industry. That's why we put in place a northern industrial energy rate program, which is bringing costs down for major mining companies by 25%, as well as other incentive programs under the Minister of Energy, which have made a real difference. That's what the Ontario Mining Association told us when we met with them the other day: that they were very pleased with that and they want to see that continue.



In terms of the comments made by the CEO of Cliffs, I think what's really important—and the leader should know this—is the way that his comments were responded to by everybody in the industry, which was that, indeed, there is significant interest in the Ring of Fire. There are a number of companies that are interested in moving forward with that, and those comments were put out very publicly yesterday by those who responded to the CEO's comments.

We are going to continue to move forward in a very positive way, making sure that we make progress related to the building of the development—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** That's a point that the minister raises, and that is, are you going to continue the northern industrial rate program? It's a shame that you've got hydro rates so high in the province that now you have to bring in a subsidy program. I suspect that this winter you're going to have to continue to expand the one for seniors and low-income Ontario families. We're already hearing stories phoned into our riding offices about families being cut off because they can't afford their hydro rates; and the winter is just beginning, I say to the member across the way.

So there's a rumour about you discontinuing the industrial hydro subsidy, and the other rumour that the mining industry is definitely worried about is that you'll do the same thing you did to De Beers, when you suddenly brought in the unexpected diamond tax: that you're going to increase the mining profits tax.

I want to know specifically, are you going to keep the subsidy on hydro for them so they can at least continue here in the province for a bit? And what are you doing about the mining tax?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I think it's really quite irresponsible, the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition, particularly as they did not support the introduction of the northern industrial energy rate program. They voted against it. We've supported this in a strong fashion. It's been extended to the year 2016 and there is a very clear commitment on our part to maintain that rate. We recognize how important that is.

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There is no question: When we met with the Mining Association a couple of days ago, they were talking positive. They were talking about the value and economic impact that a new gold mine can bring to the economy. That was fantastic.

We had another report that made it very, very clear about the huge benefit of the mining supply and services sector being about \$10 billion in—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew, come to order.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** The fact is, we've got new mines opening. We've got 10 new mines that opened in the last 10 years.

The fact is, the industry is certainly under great challenges, but we are working with them closely, and we'll continue to support them as we will in the Ring of Fire.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the Acting Premier: On Friday afternoon of the August long weekend, your government decided it was a convenient time to release a report detailing the waste and mismanagement of government pensions in the energy sector.

The report, conducted by pension expert Jim Leech, revealed that Ontario taxpayers are contributing \$5 for every \$1 that employees contribute. In fact, it's worse: Hydro One employees only contribute 12 cents of every dollar in their pension.

Minister, we all know these pensions are far from sustainable, and despite your constant promises, you've actually done nothing to fix them. Now hydro rates are going up once again on November 1, in just a couple of days. Minister, how much more are hydro rates going to increase because of your inability to manage pensions properly at OPG and Hydro One?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Interesting question, given the fact that we commissioned Jim Leech to take a review and look at what is occurring, which has been occurring over many years. We have taken an initiative, recognizing how important it is to protect taxpayers' money, because after all, we are part of this initiative.

I commend Jim Leech on the work that he has done, that he has brought forward. The question comes as a result of the efforts that we're taking, not because of any design that they've made. In fact, we're trying to correct some of the things that they put in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Again to the Acting Premier: Let me read a few quotes from that report that describe the situation your government has got us into.

The report said that pensions are "generous, expensive and inflexible." It also stated: "Should plans go further into deficit, the sponsors, and ultimately ratepayers, will be required to pay even larger contributions."

Minister, your government did recognize this problem as far back as two years ago, in 2012, when you committed in that budget to reform these ludicrous pensions. But you've done nothing since except reiterate that promise two more times.

It's clear that you won't act, or you don't want to act, or you don't have the stomach to act to get these skyrocketing hydro rates under control. Do you really think it's fair that these people, public service employees in the energy sector, have these hugely fat pensions, yet people at the other end of the spectrum in Ontario are having the lights shut off because they can't pay their bills?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The question occurs only because we are taking action. The question is only being asked today because they've never had the stomach or

the gumption to make corrections to the mistakes that they made in the past.

We are moving forward. We've done the review. Jim Leech has consulted with Hydro One, OPG, IESO and ESA. We recognize that the pensions that have been negotiated over a long period of time need to be corrected. We have taken steps already with other pension holders to the tune of saving Ontario \$2 billion every year, and we'll continue to do that in this case as well.

We have an opportunity to save the ratepayers a total of \$1 billion by 2016, not because of what they're saying, Mr. Speaker, but because of what we are doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Minister, you had Jim Leech's report before the election. You sat on it; you didn't let anybody know that you had it; and you didn't let Mr. Leech speak about his recommendations. And then, when it finally was put out on the long weekend in August, on a Friday, you said you would review the report.

You have said since 2012 that you would do something about this. Meanwhile, you've continued to sign collective agreements in the energy sector that perpetuate these bloated pensions; these bloated, unjustified payouts to people who probably go home at 5 o'clock every night, if not 4:30.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, he mentioned the Electrical Safety Authority. Well, in May of this year, you signed a collective agreement with them that not only perpetuated their bloated pensions, but you gave them a 2.7% pay increase.

Mr. Speaker, 300,000 Ontarians are out of work in the manufacturing sector. Guess what, they've had a 100% pay cut.

Why do you keep going with these pensions and increasing hydro rates in this province?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, we have had over 700,000 net new jobs since 2003. We have over 100,000 new jobs that were created last year. They suggested that we cut 100,000 jobs in their platform.

As we review Jim Leech's report, we continue to pursue efficiencies at OPG and Hydro One, through ongoing business transformation initiatives. In fact, Ed Clark is looking at it as well, something that they deny as being appropriate.

Over the last three years, efficiency savings of approximately \$500 million have been achieved in both agencies. OPG launched a company-wide business transformation initiative to enhance efficiencies further and reduce spending. To date, OPG's business transformation plan has resulted in savings of \$275 million in 2011. As noted, the work that we're doing is going to save over \$1 billion in 2016 with pensions, and Hydro One has identified over \$500 million in cost savings and productivity improvements in 2013-15 alone.

We're doing the job, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do so.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Acting Premier.

Like Elvis, Liberal credibility on openness and transparency has left the building. They insist that this time it will be different, this time they're going to be progressive and this time they going to be transparent. So can the minister explain why this time they are protecting Liberal insiders, introducing a half-baked CEO salary cap, privatizing by stealth and selling off public assets?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, Speaker, I'm not exactly sure what the question was, but let me give the answer to what I think she was asking, and that's on our executive compensation bill. I think it's very important. I think the people of this province have the right to know why people are paid what they are paid, if they're paid by taxpayers. That's why we've introduced legislation. Yesterday we announced we're actually going to introduce an amendment at committee that will expand the reach of this bill. People deserve to know why publicly paid people are getting paid what they are, so we're bringing in a process that will gather the information and then set out thoughtful, reasonable caps, bands upon which compensation will be paid. It's a much more thoughtful response than that offered by the NDP.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The Deputy Premier should read her own legislation. There is no cap in that bill.

Speaker, we know that the Liberals are planning to sell down their interest in Hydro One and to bring private companies into our local hydro utilities. We know that this Liberal government is wasting Ontarians' money on the outsourcing of IT services. We found \$200 million. Help me help you. Why wouldn't you do that? I would call that privatization, and it's a stealth agenda that you have. What does the minister call it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, this question is coming from the person who actually lobbied for the job of being the cut czar if, in fact, the NDP were to form government. This is the person who said, "Choose me. Choose me. I can find \$600 million of savings," primarily in health care and education.

This is one of the first opportunities to offer constructive advice on how we actually drive savings. To suggest that we could save \$200 million in IT by taking her advice is baloney. I don't know if that's parliamentary; if it's not, I apologize. But it just simply doesn't add up. She's got her facts wrong. She refuses to correct her facts.

We are committed to getting best value, and we would welcome helpful advice from the party opposite.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the Liberals have been saying they'll deal with out-of-control public sector CEO compensation, and for 10 years public sector CEO compensation has shot through the roof. Now the minister is saying that they will have a salary cap, but



they just won't say what that cap will be. They apparently scribbled that legislation on the back of a napkin, because somehow they forgot to include agencies like eHealth and MaRS. How can the minister expect anyone in this province to take anything that she says seriously?

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**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, once again I have to correct the facts. Yes, it is true that we have rejected the NDP position that there be a cap across all executives, no matter what the job is that they do. That is not a particularly thoughtful approach to what we all agree is an issue that we have to address.

So we will be creating hard caps. They will be different in different sectors, as well they should be. We will be looking at public sector comparators. We will be looking across Canada and beyond to actually justify the bands, including a hard cap by sector. It's a thoughtful approach to a complex problem, but we are determined to take it on.

I am very pleased that the member opposite is suggesting that they will support the amendment to expand the reach of the bill.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Again to the Acting Premier: The minister was given strict instructions, in her mandate letter, to increase transparency and accountability. But instead of ensuring that Ontarians hear testimony from the people accused of wiping computers in the Premier's office, like Peter Faist and Laura Miller, the government is protecting Liberal insiders.

Can the minister tell this House if her mandate letter is worth the paper that it's printed on?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member opposite for the question. I think that the member opposite will agree, by looking at the actions of our government, by the mandate letter—as she suggested herself—and by the legislation that she was referring to earlier on in the first part of the question dealing with government accountability and transparency, that under the leadership of our Premier, we are taking very concrete steps to ensure that government is open, that government is transparent and that information is readily available to Ontarians.

That is the commitment that we made to the people of Ontario in the last election. That is the commitment that is very clearly outlined in the speech from the throne, and we will carry through with that commitment, as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Again to the Acting Premier: The minister received a mandate letter that said to make government transparent, but instead she is protecting Liberal insiders from testifying at the committee. Her mandate letter talks about protecting public services, but the Liberals are privatizing public services like IT and hydro utilities. It talks about getting CEO pay under control, but the Liberals are introducing the first pay cap with no cap, and they're making last-minute changes

after they got caught leaving organizations like eHealth and MaRS out of the legislation.

The minister doesn't seem to take her mandate letter seriously. Why should anyone else?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** President of the Treasury Board.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Premier has made it very clear: She wants Ontario to be the most open and transparent province in the country, and that is what we're doing.

The member opposite is even referencing the mandate letters. For the first time in our history, our mandate letters have been released publicly. The member opposite is referring fully to the mandate letters, as are other people across the province who are actually paying attention to what happens in the Ontario government. I think that by releasing the mandate letters, we have signalled very clearly that we are committed to openness and transparency.

When it comes to executive compensation, just to remind anyone watching, our initial legislation covers hospitals, hydro entities, school boards, universities, colleges and CCACs; and we're expanding to 64 more organizations. We will be introducing that amendment in committee.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Well, I guess I would just say that actions speak louder than words printed on a mandate letter. The Liberals can tell themselves that they're being progressive, but this is what people actually see: They see Liberals scrambling to protect their Liberal friends from giving answers about the gas plants. They see a promise for a public sector CEO pay cap, but there's no actual cap in that legislation, and they're not even sure who it should apply to. They see a government that's outsourcing, privatizing and wasting money, but insisting that it's being responsible, this time. "Things will be different."

Does the minister think that protecting insiders, skyrocketing CEO salaries and an accelerated privatization agenda which is hurting this province is actually being progressive?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think we are doing exactly what the people of this province elected us to do. We are committed to come to balance by 2017-18 and at the same time continue to strengthen public services and build the infrastructure that this province so sorely needs.

If the member opposite has a better idea on how we can build the necessary roads and bridges and transit systems that this province needs, I'd love to have her suggestion. All I'm hearing is, "You can't do it this way; you can't do it that way; you can't do it this way," and there are, so far, zero constructive ideas on how we raise the significant capital required to build the infrastructure and assets that the people of this province need.

## DISASTER RELIEF

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, during the ice

storm last January, many municipalities stepped up to assist stranded motorists who were unable to get home as a result of closed roads. In my own riding, Shelburne and Melancthon applied for \$51,000 and \$50,000 each to the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program, only to be denied because, to quote the rejection letter, "These costs can be managed within municipal budgets."

Minister, do you believe it is fair for Shelburne and Melancthon to foot the total bill when they were sheltering stranded motorists from across Ontario?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** What I think is fair is that municipalities that for whatever reason or combination of reasons suffered the most damage and have the least ability to respond fiscally to the challenge that that presents get helped as quickly as possible. Those that have the financial wherewithal to handle the concerns will understand that those that are in greater need should get the assistance that they require. We can't respond to every request out there. The ice storm was a one-off issue as well; it wasn't like the normal ODRAP kind of position. But those municipalities that have been most challenged and are least able to respond are the ones that are getting assistance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question to the minister is, how bad does it have to be? I understand you've approved \$190 million in disaster relief funding, yet decided that Shelburne and Melancthon don't qualify.

To put this in perspective, the mayor-elect of Melancthon stated that the costs of the damages would have a serious impact on creating the next budget for the township and stressed that \$50,000 is the equivalent of a 4% tax hike.

Minister, will you reassess these requests from Shelburne and Melancthon in light of the significant burden these costs will mean to their municipal budgets?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** We have a process in place. Before the ice storm, there was no funding allocated specifically to respond to ice storm issues. This government found a way to provide \$190 million to those most stressed. I think that should be celebrated.

## TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Acting Premier.

The hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who work through temporary job agencies often work alongside co-workers while earning 40% less pay, with fewer or no benefits at all, job insecurity, and little protection against workplace abuses.

Bill 18 gave this government an opportunity to fix these problems, but the government has failed once again. Instead, they have left many of the barriers that have trapped people in insecure work for years. The government could have taken the time to listen to temporary agency workers and develop real solutions to address the problems, but instead they are rushing through a deeply flawed bill through a time allocation motion.

Why is this government using strong-arm tactics and pushing through this bill instead of protecting those vulnerable workers in our province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I thank the member for the question on Bill 18, which passed through the House yesterday, and I'm very pleased to say, with all-party support.

The intent of this bill builds on a 2009 bill which prohibited agencies from imposing barriers that prevent clients from hiring those assigned employees directly. They prohibit clients of agencies from any reprisal against assignment employees for asserting the rights they have under the Employment Standards Act.

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If this bill is passed, and I hope it is, it's going to ensure that temporary help agency recruits are not charged fees by those agencies for things like resumés, for simply taking a job, having the information they need. The seizure of passports and of documents is included in this bill.

I would urge the House and the member to support this bill. There's a process where people will be able to come forward and make recommendations along the way. I urge that we get to that point, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, a specific example of how flawed this bill is, and how it doesn't go far enough, is the fact that Bill 18 now only extends the joint and several liability to protect unpaid wages and unpaid overtime, but not public holidays and other basic employment standards. If the liability is not extended so that direct employers and temporary job agencies are responsible for all employment standards, then temporary workers are still left without protection.

New Democrats will be moving a motion that will extend all responsibility to both the employer and the temporary job agency. Will the government support this motion to truly protect the workers in this province?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you again for the supplementary question from the member. Obviously, we will all watch with interest as the process unfolds as it should.

But let me tell you what Bill 18 does do: It establishes joint and several liability between the agencies and the clients for their failure to pay wages. That means that those companies would now potentially be liable. If the agencies refuse or won't pay their workers, the companies themselves have to pay the workers. That's protection that these people don't have right now, Speaker, and it's good protection.

It also helps if the temporary help worker is injured. The injury could also affect the company's costs as well, which is an extra incentive to all companies in this province, those that employ temporary help agencies, to ensure that they've got a safe workplace. It's an added incentive. I know that that's an aim of all members of this House: that people come home from work at the end



of the day safe. This bill moves the yardsticks on this, and it's worth the support of every member in this House.

### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** My question is for the minister responsible for seniors affairs.

Minister, I think I speak for everyone when I say that Ontario seniors have significantly contributed to the success of our great province and that they continue to make meaningful and significant contributions.

Mr. Speaker, October 1 is recognized in Canada as National Seniors Day and by the United Nations as the International Day of Older Persons. On this occasion, the minister made an important announcement and gave us an update on the new Seniors Community Grant Program that our government has launched. The program is a tremendous success, helping seniors across our province to stay connected and involved in their communities, especially the seniors in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora. Would the minister please inform the House of how this grant continues to help improve the lives of seniors in Ontario?

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Newmarket–Aurora and congratulate him on his election to this Parliament. I know that he will serve the people of Newmarket–Aurora with zeal and dedication.

Let me say that our government introduced the Seniors Community Grant Program with the idea to keep our seniors engaged in activity in their own environment, in their own community to live a better and more meaningful life. The grants fund not-for-profit organizations for groups that indeed encourage and promote greater social inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement and to bring our seniors out of isolation.

I'm very proud and very pleased to inform the House that, so far, 118 projects have been already funded. Groups that have received funds are reaching out to some 25,000 citizens in our province, and we will continue to build on the success of this program.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I would like to thank the minister for his response. It's great to hear how committed our government is to our seniors, and I'm delighted to say that this grant has been very well received in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending the celebration of the re-opening of the Newmarket Seniors' Meeting Place, an organization that boasts a membership of a thousand seniors. It was a wonderful event, with a number of activities, food, entertainment and many, many seniors in attendance.

I'm pleased to say this celebration was made possible because of funding received from the seniors community grant that helped the centre reopen its doors.

Can the minister provide us with any additional details regarding this great initiative that's serving my senior constituents so well?

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Again, I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora. I know that the seniors in the ridings of the member are happy to have received the funds and done this wonderful event. Events like the one there and celebrations throughout Ontario are taking place as community groups are receiving the funding.

I have to say that I am so proud. This is the first time that our seniors in Ontario are enjoying the benefit of the first-ever grant for seniors in the province. This is going directly to helping our seniors stay connected and engaged in their own communities, living more meaningful lives.

I have to say that because of this access to the program, our funding reached from \$500,000 to \$1 million, thanks to Minister Sousa, in the 2014 budget. This is part of Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors. We will continue to work on it and continue to make Ontario the best province where seniors can age and live gracefully.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

Minister, when I asked you in estimates this week about your government's commitment to deliver two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener–Waterloo within five years, you told me, "There are a lot of commitments that governments make, that parties make ... that are aspirational in nature"—yes: aspirational in nature."

I believe that commitments made before, during or after an election are your word; they're your promise. Where we come from, we have a four-letter word for those who dress up their aspirations as commitments.

Kitchener–Waterloo residents are still waiting for the four trains going in and out that were promised seven years ago. Now they have even more reason to be skeptical.

Minister, I'll ask a very simple question: When will Kitchener–Waterloo residents see two-way, all-day GO service?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to thank the member opposite for his question. I certainly had a terrific time at estimates committee having the opportunity to respond to questions from this member, not just about issues relating to chrome yellow on school buses, for example, but also with respect to our very ambitious plan to deliver two-way, all-day—what we call regional express rail.

What I find troubling more than anything else is that this member repeatedly, in his own community—a community that is so ably represented by our member from Kitchener Centre—here today in the House and over the last few days at committee, seems to be far more interested in parsing my words and getting into a game of semantics instead of actually working hard for his community, to work with us to deliver two-way, all-day GO.

As I have said many times in this House, our government has a commitment and will deliver two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener–Waterloo, to Milton, to Barrie and along all of our corridors over the next decade. That's our plan; we'll get it done.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.  
I would be remiss if I—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I didn't like the answer either.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Your timing is so impeccable. Just when I'm ready to admonish someone on this side, you give me reason to do so.

I would be remiss if I did not tell the deputy House leader that he is warned. I will now turn to the member from Renfrew and say, you're next.

Carry on.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Back to the Minister: It does appear we've struck a chord here. In fact, Minister, in committee, those were your exact words—your government's aspirations. At least the former Minister of Transportation was actually prepared to give a timeline. So why the change of heart?

Minister, I am trying to work with you here. I'm giving you another opportunity to clear the air with the people of Kitchener-Waterloo. So can you tell us today what timeline your ministry is now aspiring to for completion of all-day, two-way GO service to Kitchener-Waterloo?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member again for this question. It's interesting to me, at committee and in press releases that he has put out to his community and here again in the House today, Speaker, that this particular member seems very taken with the word "aspirational."

Let me talk about that for a quick second. In the last election campaign, in that last consultation that we had with the people of Ontario, that member, his leader, his party, aspired to fire 100,000 Ontarians. This party, our leader, our government, aspired to move Ontario forward by building it up with an ambitious \$29-billion plan for transit and transportation over the next 10 years. That's the work we're doing. We're going to deliver for Kitchener, for Milton, for Barrie, for Brampton, for Mississauga and for the entire province because that's our job, and we'll get the job done.

1110

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Speaker, once again this afternoon, I will be bringing forward legislation protecting child performers, Bill 17, to the Legislature for second reading. This is essential legislation to ensure that working children have the safest working environment possible in our province.

My first bill, Bill 71, was tabled on May 15, 2013. Unfortunately, after going through committee with the government's support and assurances that the bill would go, it ended up as a political football on the order paper.

Can this minister confirm to me that there will be no—I repeat, no—political games for this current bill which protects children?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I thank the honourable member for the question. If I was able to guarantee there would be no political games in this House, I'd be one unique politician.

But let me tell you that I do support the bill personally. I know, through the ministry processes, as we've investigated the bill over the years, that it's a bill that's received support from the Ministry of Labour as well.

I look forward to the debate this afternoon. I look forward to the passage of this bill through the process. At the end of the day, Speaker, you know, I know, and the member knows—and we've had conversations on this. He knows how personally supportive I am of this bill. At the end of the day, it's the will of this House that will pass this bill. It will be the three parties working together and the House leaders agreeing that this bill will move forward.

I can honestly say that I wish the member well. He will have my personal support and the support of the ministry as this process continues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Minister, for your support. I hope the House leaders feel the same way.

Speaker, Bill 17 encompasses the amendments that were made in committee just 11 and a half months ago. It has been through intensive writing, review and committee processes. Ministry staff worked with ACTRA, Equity and me on the bill. All the parties worked on it through the committee process and passed it. The protection of child performers, the only legal child labour in Ontario, must be enshrined in law. Their safety should never be subject to negotiations by House leaders.

Will this minister commit right now to his and his government's full support to protecting child performers by passing Bill 17 to third reading and royal assent, not stalling it at House leaders' meetings?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you to the member once again for the supplementary. I'm sure all members in this House understand that the need to keep our kids safe, whether it's at school or in the workplace, is something that we all—to use a word used recently—aspire to. It's something we want to see happen.

There's a process that's employed in this House. The House leaders meet on a regular basis. They decide on the agenda of the House. Bills proceed in that way.

Speaker, I've met with the member opposite to express our support for the bill. Nothing would make me happier than to see this bill proceed. If it's the will of the third party, which I believe it is—certainly my colleagues on this side of the House that I've spoken to are in support of this bill. We want to see it move forward. We wish you well in this regard.

There's a process that needs to be followed. The Conservatives I can't speak for; they can speak for themselves. I know where the rest of us stand.

## PORK INDUSTRY

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. There are



approximately 1,549 pork producers in the province of Ontario. They market roughly 4.8 million hogs, an industry contributing upwards of \$5.6 billion to the Ontario economy.

On January 22, 2014, the first case of PED was discovered in Ontario—a virus causing high death loss in pigs, especially nursing piglets. The disease, which struck in the United States in the spring of 2013, has killed millions of piglets south of the border and helped drive up pork prices. It has spread through 30 US states and infected more than 8,500 farms.

Can the minister please update the House on what the government is doing to support Ontario's swine producers during their challenging times?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the hard-working member for Northumberland—Quinte West for that question this morning.

The agri-food industry in the province of Ontario represents \$34 billion of GDP, 760,000 individuals are employed in this industry, and the pork sector makes up \$5.6 billion of the total GDP.

Since PED was first discovered in the United States, the province and the industry have made concerted efforts to educate producers, transporters and suppliers about the virus and helped them implement strong biosecurity measures. In fact, through a RED grant in the county of Lambton, Ontario, we're providing funds now for a trucking firm which is the first biosecurity firm, I believe, in North America. That's a great tribute to the ingenuity of people in Lambton county.

Our government has provided over \$2 million in immediate assistance to Ontario Pork, following the outbreak, to support industry-wide enhancements—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** —to biosecurity through a special—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** —Growing Forward 2 intake. More than 1,000 applications—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will sit, and he knows better.

Supplementary.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you to the minister for his answer. It is clear that the collaborative efforts by veterinarians, farm groups, government, farmers and many people in the swine sector to fight the disease in Ontario, coupled with the province's preparedness and the resources put forward in fighting this virus, have been instrumental in responding to and limiting the spread of PED in Ontario.

But, Minister, on July 21, 2014, PED was found on an Ontario farm as part of the industry PED surveillance elimination project. Producers, industry and the public want to know why Ontario is continuing to see cases of PED. Can the minister please inform the House on why we continue to see cases of PED in Ontario and how we're addressing the challenges as we head into the winter months?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member for his supplementary. The early identification of the source in Canada, along with the summer weather, has helped reduce the impact of the virus in Ontario and has limited its spread. In fact, it has been over three months since the last case of the virus was confirmed, while Manitoba and some US states continued to have new cases throughout the spring and summer months.

It's important to note that PED is a virus that tends to flourish in cold weather.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with officials from Mexico and the United States to discuss PED, and shared information and heard from experts on how leaders can help prepare their region to manage an outbreak and defeat it.

It remains critical for all the parts of the pork value chain—producers, transporters, suppliers—to be vigilant with biosecurity practices to prevent PED and other viruses from getting inside the swine production units in Ontario. My ministry has been working and will continue to work with the pork industry in strategies to mitigate the risk of PED's impact this fall and winter, and to ensure Ontario's vital pork industry in this province.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is for the Minister of Education.

Minister, we all know that your Bill 10 is seriously flawed. In spite of that, you still want to push it through this House quickly. The bill does absolutely nothing to provide a safer daycare system. We calculate that a minimum of 140,000 independent daycare spaces will be lost and eliminated.

You disagree with that number. So, Minister, it's very simple: How many independent daycare spaces have you calculated will be lost? A simple number is all I want to hear.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Actually, I'd love to hear how he calculated 140,000. I can actually—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is warned.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm very happy to tell the member opposite that, in fact, we have, since we came into government, licensed 130,000 new spaces, and that's actual licensing data, that we have those new licensed child care spaces.

I really do have to challenge what the member opposite has said about Bill 10—because, as we all know, the Ombudsman recently tabled a report. He made a number of recommendations.

1120

I simply want to quote what the Ombudsman told a Queen's Park briefing. He said, "I am satisfied that the bill takes care of what needs to be legislated. I am satisfied with the current course of what's happening, and with the undertaking of the minister to continue"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** The same people who wrote your briefing notes are the same people who let down the daycare system for the last 10 years.

Minister, I want to tell you that there are rallies being planned to protest the flawed Bill 10 and the loss of 140,000 independent daycare spaces. We expect a rally will be held in your riding of Guelph in early November, and we'd like to do it according to your schedule.

These protests are being held because independent daycare operators have been completely left out of the consultation process that created this flawed bill, in spite of the fact that independent daycare providers provide about 78% of the spaces in Ontario. But you know what? They don't belong to the Working Families coalition. They don't have a big union to support them.

Since you are denying child care providers a voice by not allowing the bill to travel, as the MPP for Guelph, will you attend the Guelph rally and hear the concerns of your constituents?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** We really do need to talk about the reality of how people have responded to the bill. For example, if you talk about the response of Andrea Calver, who is the coordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, she says, "This is broad legislation that is going to ... really crack down on those unlicensed operators who have more than five children. But it also has impact on child care centres and a very significant proposal for children from six to 12."

I'd like to tell you another quote from Andrea Calver: "It's really a big step to moving from a patchwork of programs to a system of early learning and child care.... We really feel this legislation is part of the move to create an early learning and child care system."

#### CHILD CARE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Parents expect this government to do its job and keep kids safe in daycare, but the Ombudsman has uncovered a shocking lack of inspectors to do the job. There are just 49 permanent child care advisers in Ontario, and the minister's new enforcement unit will only add six inspectors.

It's no wonder illegal daycares operate with impunity, taking advantage of families without getting caught. There simply aren't enough inspectors to do the job.

How can the minister possibly defend having just one inspector for every 22,000 kids in daycare?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to talk a little bit about the findings of both the Ombudsman and our ministry. When we looked at the old way in which inspectors were organized, they were responsible primarily for visiting, reviewing, issuing and renewing licences, and then, coincidentally, had additional responsibility to respond to complaints about unlicensed care.

What we've done is created a new unit whose only responsibility is to respond to complaints about

unlicensed child care. That move to create a totally dedicated enforcement unit that will only worry about complaints on unlicensed child care has been endorsed by the Ombudsman. In fact, his recommendations include moving ahead with setting that up, and I'm very pleased to report that that unit has been set up.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Speaker, I must have read a different report, because the quote that I read from the Ombudsman said "too little, too late." Inspectors say they're drowning under their workload and are unable to keep up. That means that kids will continue to fall through the cracks.

According to the Ombudsman himself, the minister's new enforcement unit will just have six investigators able to lay charges against illegal operators. It's nothing but a drop in the bucket, because there is no way that one inspector can keep 22,000 kids safe day in and day out.

In contrast, the private day home agencies are required to employ one inspector for every 25 homes, which equals to 125 kids. Why does the minister have such low standards for her own department?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm afraid that the member didn't actually understand the previous response, but let's just move on to what the Ombudsman said. The Ombudsman said, in his report, that "the government and the ministry have taken positive steps and made concrete plans to improve the process for dealing with complaints about unlicensed daycares...."

"In the past year, the ministry has made genuine and focused efforts to rise to the challenge of ensuring that Ontario has a proactive, timely, risk-based, and effective system for monitoring unlicensed child care operations."

I would like to repeat that all the people in this unit will do nothing but respond to complaints and make sure that any directives they issue have been completed. When we get Bill 10, they will actually have the ability to impose fines; they will actually have the ability to close down daycares which are unsafe.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique. Tomorrow is Halloween, a day when ghosts and ghouls come out across the province looking for treats and hoping to avoid being tricked. It's a wonderful time when communities like mine come together with decorations and costumes, and get to meet their neighbours in the spookiest of settings. I know children in Ottawa-Orléans are particularly excited to show off their costumes and go trick-or-treating door to door.

While we all enjoy our time with family and friends during Halloween, and dress up as many of our favourite monsters and villains, it's important to remember the different ways we can be green while celebrating Halloween.

Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change please update the House



on what our government is doing to help Ontarians enjoy a more environmentally friendly Halloween?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank my dear friend from Ottawa—Orléans for that great question. I also would like to wish everyone in the House a very safe and spooky Halloween, if you're out with your little ones. If you haven't gone door to door enough this year, at least you get candies and a smile this time.

I also just want to recognize that this program is really the remarkable creative work of the very great people who work in the Ministry of the Environment, and I'm very proud to be here on the floor on their behalf. They have come up this year with a campaign highlighting a number of Enviroween monsters to remind us ghosts and ghouls about some of the small actions all of us can take to help protect the environment. I've got some favourites. If you have been to the social media website, you'll see these folks.

Dr. Frankenfill's Monster reminds us of the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling to make sure we keep as much waste out of our landfills as possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Oh, I'm sorry. All right.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Got to go. Supplementary.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Again, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister, I'm terrifically thrilled to hear that once again the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change is finding fun ways to encourage Ontarians to enjoy their Halloween in an environmentally friendly way. I'm sure constituents of my riding of Ottawa—Orléans will be happy to know they can have a frightfully good time at Halloween while doing their part to fight environmental evils like Dr. Frankenfill's Monster and something else, Bottlezilla.

I especially appreciate the minister's mention of Ontario drinking water. It's important that we protect one of our most precious resources now and for the future generations of ghouls and goblins.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you inform this House of any witches and warlocks the people of Ontario should be on the lookout for to help protect our water?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Maybe I can go through some of the other characters. There's Xhaust, who encourages people to walk, cycle, carpool or take public transit to reduce emissions from vehicles. My personal favourite, Bottlezilla, is a monster I have some personal experience with, encouraging people to fill up at the tap and bring a reusable bottle with them, to reduce waste and take advantage of Ontario's world-class, great drinking water.

It would be great if members of the Legislature—these are non-partisan. We have blue characters, red characters, orange characters and green characters, so you can find your favourite. It's a great social media to get kids more aware about the simple things.

My other favourite is the Pillutor, which teaches us not to flush our pharmaceuticals down the toilet.

There are some very good lessons here. I hope you'll take advantage of these very non-partisan tools.

1130

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Acting Premier. In question period on July 8, the Premier acknowledged the need to construct the Highway 6 Morriston bypass. She said, and I quote from Hansard, "There are investments needed. I would just call attention to a statement that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills made yesterday." That statement of mine, the one she was talking about, had highlighted the need for the Morriston bypass.

If the Premier, who is herself a former Minister of Transportation, thinks that the Highway 6 Morriston bypass is needed, why is it not yet on the ministry's five-year plan for new highway construction?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member opposite for the question today and also for raising it on a number of occasions since June 24, when I was first sworn in as Minister of Transportation—and also for raising this issue at the estimates committee yesterday.

Just to be clear, our government does understand the need to move forward with the realignment of Highway 6 between Freelon and Guelph, which will of course bypass the community of Morriston and provide improved connection to Highway 401 and the Hanlon Expressway. We continue to move the project along with respect to the design and environmental phases, to eventually prepare for construction.

But what I also said at estimates yesterday I think bears repeating in this House: This is one of the reasons that I'm encouraged to hear these kinds of questions from members on the other side of the House, because it's a clear recognition from them that it's very important for our government to make the kinds of crucial investments in public infrastructure like highways, bypasses and transit. I look forward to seeing ongoing support from these members for our very ambitious \$29-billion plan for public infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** That's all well and good, but I think I need to point out that, on October 6, representatives of the Morriston Bypass Coalition were here at Queen's Park. The coalition includes the city of Guelph, the city of Hamilton, their chambers of commerce, businesses like Tim Hortons, Maple Leaf Foods, Nestlé Waters, Canada Bread and Cargill, as well as the county of Wellington and the township of Puslinch.

The minister knows that I've been calling for the construction of the Morriston bypass for many, many years, predating his appointment as minister. When will he finally put it on the five-year plan?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member for the follow-up. As I said at committee yesterday, the Ministry

of Transportation is in the process right now of finalizing the next rollout of the five-year plan that he referenced in the question. I do look forward to continuing to work with him, members from his community and members from communities right across the province of Ontario as we do move forward with our plan to build Ontario up.

Again, this is why it is so crucial for us to have comprehensive and full support in this Legislature for the \$29 billion that we'll be investing, \$14 billion of which will be for crucial infrastructure outside the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and up to \$15 billion for public transit projects in the GTHA.

It's why it's so important for us to see—in communities like that member's, and in all other communities that we all represent as 107 members of this Legislature—that we need to invest. You can't slash and burn your way to growth. This is the way to build up Ontario and move the province forward.

### PENSION PLANS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question. The member from Ottawa.

**Interjections:** Oshawa.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oshawa. The member from Oshawa.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Yes, the far, distant land of Oshawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. The government stated in this year's budget that individuals participating in a comparable workplace pension plan would not be required to enrol in the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. In that same document, the Liberal government committed to introducing PRPP legislation in the fall of 2014, nearly three years before the planned ORPP would even see the light of day.

The Liberal government claims that their priority is to create a public pension plan for the workers of this province, yet they are leading with a private option that will send Ontarians' hard-earned contributions to Bay Street.

Will the government's bank-friendly PRPPs be considered comparable and qualify for an exemption from the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan? Is this why the Liberal government is giving PRPPs a three-year head start over the ORPP?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I want to thank the member from Oshawa for her question and for her work as the critic on pensions.

Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have a retirement savings challenge. People are simply not saving enough for their retirement, and this is of concern for our economic future. What we've committed to do in our budget is to introduce the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. That is our commitment and that is what we intend to do, to ensure that we have a secure retirement future for Ontarians. At the same time, we know that people will continue to have their goals in retirement. We have

to ensure that there is a strong retirement system here in Ontario, including voluntary measures such as the PRPP.

### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Simcoe North has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Education concerning Bill 10. This matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

### DEFERRED VOTES

#### FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Would the members take their seats, please.

On October 21, 2014, Mr. Bradley moved second reading of Bill 15. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Harris, Michael	McNaughton, Monte
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Meilleur, Madeleine
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Hudak, Tim	Miller, Norm
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Murray, Glen R.
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Naqvi, Yasir
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Nicholls, Rick
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Orzietti, David
Damerla, Dipika	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Del Duca, Steven	MacLeod, Lisa	Potts, Arthur
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Qaadri, Shafiq
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Rinaldi, Lou
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Sandals, Liz
Dong, Han	Martow, Gilda	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dunlop, Garfield	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiane
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fraser, John	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Gravelle, Michael	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Cimino, Joe  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Fife, Catherine  
Forster, Cindy  
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne  
Mantha, Michael  
Miller, Paul  
Natyshak, Taras  
Sattler, Peggy

Singh, Jagmeet  
Tabuns, Peter  
Taylor, Monique  
Vanthof, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 14.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 29, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to correct my record from this morning. I used the wrong Judy. Judy Finlay was the former child advocate. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member is correct in terms that all members have the opportunity to correct their record, and that was in order.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction of guests?

Am I watching a member hurrying to his chair to introduce a guest? The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Shortly joining us are two members of the Aurora Lions Club. We have Ra'ed Dallal and Rola Issa Dallal joining us from King City and Aurora.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** It is my privilege and honour to welcome—before they get here—Brian Keys and his family and support: Terry Keys, Darlene Young and Trish Parr. Brian Keys is a proud recipient of today's Ontario Senior Achievement Awards from Oshawa for all of his hard work over the age of 65, and before then, in Oshawa at Hillsdale Terraces.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Joining me this afternoon—again, they will be here shortly—for second reading of the my bill are: Duberlis Ramos, executive director of the Hispanic Development Council; Claudia Montoya, president of Casa Cultural Colombiana; Margarita Feliciano, founder of Festival of Images and Words; Oscar Vigil, Hispanic Canadian Heritage Council; and Claudio Ruiz,

executive director of the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions? No further introductions? Last call for introductions.

You just slipped in under the wire. The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My apologies, Speaker. It is a great honour to welcome Emil Kolb, who is current chair of the region of Peel and a 50-year long-serving public servant. So, welcome, Emil.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

Third last call for introductions of guests.

Thank you. It is now time for members' statements.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### VETERANS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** There are people who are willing to put their values and beliefs before their own safety: people like veterans who fought to protect our way of life, our freedom and our democracy; people who have made the ultimate sacrifice, like Tyler William Todd from Oxford.

Last week, that sacrifice was made close to home, when an unarmed soldier was shot guarding our National War Memorial. We can never repay the debt we owe these soldiers, but we should show them respect in every way we can.

Tomorrow, the Royal Canadian Legion poppy campaign begins. People will wear poppies to show their respect and thank our veterans. But even though the veterans fought for our democracy, we as MPPs are not supposed to have poppy donation boxes in our offices.

Mr. Speaker, the public comes to our office for help accessing their government, to speak about their concerns and their complaints. It should be a place where they can show their respect for the veterans who fought and ensured they had those rights.

Last week, I introduced a bill to allow MPPs to have poppy boxes in their offices. To ensure that we can accomplish this before Remembrance Day, in a few minutes I will be moving a unanimous consent motion asking that the Legislature declare that MPPs are allowed to have poppy donation boxes in their offices.

I thank the three House leaders for their support and hope that all members will join me in showing our respect and thanks to our veterans.

##### SUPER SANTA RUN

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to acknowledge the Essex Region Conservation Foundation's Super Santa Run. Amherstburg's annual Super Santa Run is to be held this year on November 15. Participants are asked to run or walk along a five-kilometre route starting in downtown Amherstburg. This event is a fun event for the

whole family. In addition to promoting healthy and active living, it is a great way to kick off the holiday season.

Runners are being asked to meet on Sunday, November 15 at 5 p.m. at Navy Yard Park. Upon arrival, participants will receive a free, five-piece Santa suit to wear during the run, including jacket, pants, belt, beard and a Santa hat. Last year, there were more than 350 runners. The cost is \$35 per adult and \$20 for children.

The Essex Region Conservation Foundation was established as a charitable public foundation in 1977 with the vital goal to receive and maintain funds for charitable, educational, conservation and heritage purposes related to the conservation and restoration of natural and heritage resources in the Essex region.

The foundation supports the Essex Region Conservation Authority by raising funds required to reforest and green the Essex region, protect those significant natural areas that remain, and preserve our natural and cultural heritage. They also restore wetlands and increase green connections through acquiring and developing trails.

All the funds raised go to the Essex Region Conservation Foundation and their Trail On! campaign to complete the Essex-Amherstburg Greenway. I wish them a great run, and merry Christmas to all the runners who are going to be participating.

EMIL KOLB

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's my pleasure today to recognize not merely one of my political mentors but also the retiring chair of Peel region, in the members' west gallery, Mr. Emil Kolb.

Mr. Kolb is going to be taking his leave after this immediately past provincial election, and I'd just like members and all of those watching to know what a wonderful contribution Emil Kolb has made to the development of the three dynamic municipalities that make up Peel region—certainly Mississauga, where I'm from, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon, which is where Emil hails from. Emil has guided the region of Peel and its three dynamic, fast-growing cities for well more than a generation and has really seen Peel region and its municipalities from being almost rural municipalities to being the fastest-growing part of Canada today.

We are very proud of Emil Kolb's accomplishments as the chair of Peel region. He has worked very, very well and very effectively in his understated and professional manner with the city councils of Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga. The harmony that we've seen in the way our municipalities have developed is, in many ways, a testimony to the fine leadership provided to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon by Emil Kolb. Good luck, Emil. Thank you.

EMIL KOLB

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I, also, am honoured to rise to recognize one of Caledon and the region of Peel's out-

standing public servants, Emil Kolb, who is retiring after 50 years of public service.

Emil began his career in 1964 when he sat as a member of the Albion township planning board. In 1970 he was elected as a Peel county councillor and served until 1973, when he took a seat as a Peel region councillor for the town of Caledon.

He continued to serve in that role until being elected mayor in 1985, and since 1991 he has served as chair of the region of Peel. In fact, Emil has served as a member of the Peel police services board for so long that he is known across Canada as the godfather of police board governance—but in a good way.

For everyone who knows Emil, you will know that there isn't a public building or an organization in the region of Peel that he cannot tell you a story of how it began, who was involved to get it started and, often, who you had to lobby to get it done. That must be the hallmark of great public service: have a great memory and never make an enemy.

On behalf of the residents of Dufferin-Caledon and the Ontario Legislature, I'd like to thank you, Emil Kolb, for your commitment to public service and to the region of Peel. Your 50 years of dedication to Peel is incredible, and your many contributions to the region are unforgettable. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We thank him for his service. Welcome.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Paul Miller:** This afternoon, we will once again debate second reading of the bill to protect child performers in the live and recorded entertainment industries. Currently this protection is left to the push and pull of contract negotiations. What child safety issues could negotiators be forced to give up for another pressing contract issue?

We had a chance, just 10 and a half months ago, to do it right, to become a leader in child performer protection, but some MPPs fell into the abyss of political game-playing with child safety.

We went through an intense process last year with ACTRA, Equity, the producers and the Minister of Labour and his staff, as well as a committee session that brought forward some adopted amendments. We did our due diligence, and we worked well together.

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I am hopeful that with some new faces in new party positions, we can again all work together. But this time, we need to get through third reading and to royal assent. We need to ensure the best protection for child performers. We have the chance to show that we can and will work for the best interests of Ontarians and of child performers, not just our own political agendas.

I look forward to all-party support to bring Bill 17, Protecting Child Performers, quickly onto the committee agenda, and then to third reading and royal assent.



## RIDING OF CAMBRIDGE

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I stand today in this House to pay tribute to two long-serving politicians retiring from their roles as regional councillors in my riding of Cambridge.

Claudette Millar was elected as mayor of Preston in 1970, in a time when women politicians were not as commonly seen as today. After Preston, Galt and Hespeler amalgamated into Cambridge in 1973, she was elected as the first mayor of the city of Cambridge. In 2003, she was elected as regional councillor, and she went on to be re-elected in 2006 and 2010.

At the broader municipal level, Claudette served on the Ontario Municipal Board from 1987 to 1992.

Jane Brewer was elected as ward alderman to Cambridge city council in 1978. She was elected mayor of Cambridge from 1988 until the year 2000, when she was elected as the regional councillor for Cambridge, serving a combined 32 years on Waterloo regional council. She decided not to seek re-election, and she recently turned 90 years old.

These two extraordinary women, both role models for women in politics, are now retired. I know the city of Cambridge and all constituents will join me in thanking them for their many years of exemplary public service.

## ART FLEMING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** When my riding, the old riding of Niagara South, merged with the riding of Lincoln back in 1999, I did what a lot of members do and made efforts to know some of the leaders in that community. And I had to go and see one couple particularly, Art and Val Fleming. Business leaders and leaders in philanthropy—they were Conservatives—but they kind of knew what was happening in town. They had that one true value that we all admire in people: They told you not what you wanted to hear, but what you needed to hear.

Over the years, Deb and I were blessed to have their friendship. We got to know them quite well. Every Christmas, Val would send out a letter to all those on her list, with a nice picture of the family—the kids, the grandkids, the great-grandkids—and catch us up on their adventures.

Sadly, this year, Art won't be there. In his 91st year, just short of his 91st birthday, Art Fleming passed away. This was one of the leading citizens in Beamsville, Ontario, one of its most respected and beloved individuals, a man who was born, raised his family and passed away on the same piece of land that's been in the family since 1926.

He built Fleming Chicks, one of the largest employers in town, and then gave back far, far more to the community, setting up the Art and Val Fleming Fund and the Niagara Community Foundation. Strong in their Christian faith, they passed on to their kids values of hard work and community service. The love they had for each other was incredible to behold at their family functions.

Art passed away watching over his grandkids with great pride and incredible love. Today, I want to salute an extraordinary and historic figure in Beamsville, Ontario, Art Fleming. We're going to miss him.

## AURORA LIONS CLUB

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Thank you for the opportunity to bring good news from my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, specifically about the 70th anniversary of the Aurora Lions Club, which we celebrated this past weekend with a special dinner. Seventy years of contribution to the community is certainly something to be proud of, and it clearly demonstrates that Aurora Lions members live up to the international club's motto: "We serve."

In Aurora, the Lions have been among our volunteer leaders. There are a number of local Lions projects that stand out for me: Lions Park, the original town park band shell, funding for our public library, and the Christmas basket program that still continues. And for those fortunate enough to have tasted them, no one can forget hot pancakes served with fresh maple syrup at the sugaring off at Sheppard's Bush. Lions indeed serve, in this case, thousands of pancakes each year.

The Lions have also been a big part of providing visually challenged people with wonderful guide dogs, two of which attended last Saturday's dinner accompanied by their guardians. I was also impressed to learn that the Aurora Lions sponsor nearly 500 vision tests for young Aurora schoolchildren each year and continue to collect glasses for overseas use. This is in keeping with the club's strong focus on vision.

Going forward, the club is growing to meet the demands of the next 70 years. I'm honoured to stand here today to thank all who serve and have served in the Aurora Lions Club. I'm proud to say that the Lions still roar loudly in our wonderful community of Aurora.

## HALTON FOREST FESTIVAL

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of stopping by Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area in Halton, one of the most beautiful places in southern Ontario. I was greeted by hundreds of schoolchildren exploring our local forest. They were everywhere: hiking down trails, sitting in circles around fire pits, and gathering in groups in tents. It was all part of the annual Forest Festival put on by Conservation Halton.

This festival is unique. It offers 24 interactive curriculum-linked outdoor activities to educate local students about the importance of respecting and appreciating our local wildlife and environment. They learn about everything, from the composition of the dirt under their feet to the impact of sunlight on our tall trees. It's a fantastic opportunity for kids to learn and explore our natural environment. Thanks to the 300 volunteers and organizers who tirelessly devoted their time and energy, it was an incredible success.

This year, 1,400 grades 6 and 7 students took part in the week-long event, along with countless others.

During my visit, I was taken on a tour of the grounds and I saw first-hand some of the innovative activities taking place. I strolled through the forest, even carried a corn snake—believe me, that's something I'll never forget—and I talked with instructors.

By educating our young people about the environment, the Forest Festival will hopefully inspire generations of environmentally conscious kids to safeguard our natural spaces.

#### WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 34

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Oxford on a point of order.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to withdraw Bill 34, as I will shortly be asking for unanimous consent to move a motion that would accomplish the same thing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Oxford is seeking unanimous consent to withdraw his private member's bill, Bill 34.

Do we agree? Agreed.

#### VETERANS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the Remembrance Day poppy boxes in members' offices.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Oxford is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I move that in order to recognize the sacrifices that our veterans made to preserve our freedom and democracy, members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly are permitted to have Remembrance Day poppy donation boxes in their office.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we agree? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I beg leave to present a report on Ornge Air Ambulance and Related Services: Summary Report from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move its adoption.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves its adoption. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, the interim report was tabled on June 4, 2013, and focused on the identification of issues and a statement of observations.

The summary report, which covers the 2013-14 hearings, focuses on the committee's concerns which point to

the deviation from the fundamental principles of public administration, namely accountability, transparency and value for money. Program delivery at Ornge was compromised and patients did not always receive the optimum services required.

The objectives of this report were to examine why corrective measures were not taken when red flag warnings occurred and how to avoid a recurrence of similar problems by identifying contributing factors.

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The committee found the matters identified in the Auditor General's report could be attributed primarily to:

- the absence of due diligence and oversight on the part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in applying accountability;

- the lack of transparency and accountability on the part of Ornge's management and board of directors, compounded by systemic operational issues; and

- shortcoming in Ornge's first performance agreement.

There was an apparent inability or unwillingness by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to obtain the information needed to exercise proper oversight of Ornge. Where a government ministry is the primary funder of a crown agency or community service provider, reliable information is required on a timely basis to assess the service levels and cost-effectiveness of those services. The ministry was not diligent in pursuing red flags indicative of potential problems at Ornge.

As well, there are questions as to whether Ornge's current business model provides better patient care than the previous model.

The committee is of the view that Ornge, under the direction of Dr. Mazza, drove the air ambulance program into the ground, leaving very little to rebuild on. As well, poor staff morale was a significant factor in overall operations.

The committee would like to acknowledge the commitment of Ornge personnel in providing ambulance services to Ontarians in a challenging environment.

The report requires the immediate attention of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Ornge's new management. Pursuant to standing order 32(d), the committee has requested a comprehensive response to this report from the auditees within 120 days.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—Lisa MacLeod, Han Dong, John Fraser, Percy Hatfield, Harinder Malhi, Julia Munro, Arthur Potts and Lou Rinaldi—for dealing with this report.

I would also like to thank the previous committee, as everyone in this House will know this report was heard over a long period of time, and everybody put a lot of effort into it. In fact, the committee that is there today just did this as we started up the new committee under the new government. I just wanted to point out that the committee that did that was the public accounts committee. They held 40 days of public hearings to look at the Auditor General's special report on Ornge. A total of 85



witnesses testified for 147 hours over a 26-month period. I want to thank the members who served on the committee during that time: Lorenzo Berardinetti, France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek, Phil McNeely, John O'Toole, Jagmeet Singh and Soo Wong. I also want to recognize Frank Klees, Jerry Ouellette and Bill Mauro, who participated in the committee, and most of those all the time during the committee; they just substituted in for the whole committee.

So I want to thank all those people for a job well done, and I also want to thank the Auditor General for all the work that she did, the assembly staff and all the people who appeared before the committee.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me a few minutes to highlight the report. I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Hardeman moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

*Debate adjourned.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### SECURITY FOR COURTS, ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITIES AND NUCLEAR FACILITIES ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES TRIBUNAUX, DES CENTRALES ÉLECTRIQUES ET DES INSTALLATIONS NUCLÉAIRES

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** The Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act is a priority for the government, which in essence would do three things: (1) repeal the Public Works Protection Act; (2) set out a legislative amendment to the Police Services Act to address court security; and (3) set out stand-alone legislation respecting security at prescribed electricity generating and nuclear facilities.

This bill would strike the necessary balance between protecting civil liberties and ensuring the safety of critical infrastructure.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to share with the members the concrete steps our government is taking to accelerate the modernization of long-term-care homes in Ontario. A long-term-care home for its residents is just that—a home—and all Ontarians who reside in long-term-care homes deserve to live in a comfortable, safe and inviting environment.

Our government has made important investments in home care so that more seniors can live longer in their own homes. I am proud to say that our government has already made terrific gains in this area during the last decade with the creation of more than 10,000 new long-term-care beds and the redevelopment of nearly 13,000 older long-term-care beds. But we recognized that more needs to be done to speed up the pace of redevelopment.

As our population ages, long-term care will continue to play a vital role in our commitment to make Ontario the healthiest place in Canada to grow old. And, partly because of our increased supports for home care, we are seeing an increasingly acute population in our long-term-care homes. That makes it even more important that we invest today to ensure the continued safety and quality of care for residents by helping to bring all long-term-care homes in the province up to the most modern design standards.

To achieve this goal, we are committed to provide increased support to long-term-care home operators to ultimately redevelop about 30,000 long-term-care beds. We have set a deadline of 2025 for the operators of those homes to update their homes and to meet all provincial and local building codes, safety standards and revised design standards—all meant to enhance the quality of life and safety for residents.

Our enhanced Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy was noted in the July 2014 provincial budget, and today I would like to present it to the House in much detail. The members should also note that I announced our enhanced strategy at the Ontario Long Term Care Association's Fall Symposium on Tuesday.

First, we will establish a dedicated project office to support the program within the ministry. This office will facilitate a faster review of plans and will be a single point of contact for operators as they submit their plans and work through the process.

Second, we will increase the construction funding subsidies by up to \$4.73 per day.

Third, we will extend the maximum LTC home licence term from 25 years to 30 years. The necessary amendments to the Ontario Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, have already been passed and are ready to come into force on proclamation by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Fourth, we will establish a committee to review individual requests for exemptions from the existing

design standards. While we will not entertain variances that impact provincial or local health and safety regulations, operators have asked for other design flexibilities, and we will entertain those on a case-by-case basis.

Fifth, we will encourage the renewal of LTC home beds through increased premiums for preferred accommodations.

Finally, we will work with the sector to schedule the redevelopment of homes.

Over the next few weeks, we will turn to the sector to consult on these elements of our redevelopment plan and seek even further input on their implementation. This is something the sector requested, and we are happy to accommodate them.

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It is important to note that the changes we're bringing forward are the result of preliminary consultations with key stakeholders in the sector. I would like to thank the Ontario Long Term Care Association, the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, and other individuals and organizations for their advice on the best way to remove obstacles and kick-start the renewal of long-term-care homes. Further consultation is to improve delivery and content and will, we hope, encourage a greater uptake in the redevelopment process.

I want to assure the members that we will continue to talk to long-term-care operators, resident advocates and LHINs before we finalize all aspects of the strategy. Working closely with the sector will be a big part of ensuring success. To this end, we will be creating a stakeholder advisory committee to further engage the sector.

Our goal is to formally launch the enhanced renewal strategy during the winter of 2014-15, after the engagement process with stakeholders has been completed. We're aiming to have long-term-care homes begin redevelopment projects starting in the fall of 2015.

I'm very committed to addressing the disparities between older and newer long-term-care homes and to working with the homes to help them reach the revised standards in the appropriate timelines. The enhanced renewal strategy will boost redevelopment of older long-term-care beds by improving the business conditions in the sector.

I believe these proposed changes will greatly contribute to the stability and capacity of Ontario's long-term-care-home sector. Redevelopment is essential to ensuring the privacy, safety, security and comfort of all long-term-care-home residents today and well into the future. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Statements by ministries?

It is now time for responses.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'm pleased to rise in the House today, in my role as critic of long-term care and wellness, in response to the associate minister's announcement of her government's plan to redevelop 30,000 beds in 300 long-term-care homes, which is just under half of the province's 633 homes, a capital redevelopment plan that was promised in the last provincial budget.

Sadly, this announcement feels like Groundhog Day. In provincial elections beginning in the year 2003—that's four in total—the Ontario Liberal Party promised to do the following for long-term care if elected: to build 35,000 new long-term-care beds and to establish a standard of quality care that nursing homes must provide each resident. When they failed to deliver the first time around, they reannounced the same promises in the succeeding elections by signing the following pledges:

Pledge 1: "Ontario Liberals will increase the level of care in nursing homes and reinstate minimum standards."

Pledge 2: "Ontario Liberals will reinstate the standards of care for nursing homes ... including a minimum 2.25 hours of nursing care daily and three baths per week."

Eleven years and many Liberal health ministers later, our seniors continue to languish on wait-lists which have tripled since 2005. Meanwhile, those who are fortunate enough to land a spot in a care home continue to go without the minimum standards of daily care that they were promised by this government, leading perhaps to the many horror stories we've heard about residents sadly lying in their own waste for hours or not eating for hours after the usual mealtime. I say shame on this government.

Firstly, I want to say that we owe our senior citizens respect and thanks for the freedom and prosperity we enjoy today, and so it saddens me and it saddens my PC colleagues to see the seniors of our province struggling today to make ends meet.

Hydro rates are so high that, as I stand here before you, many seniors in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across Ontario are having their hydro disconnected because of their inability to pay your skyrocketing rates. And winter is not even here yet.

In addition to the unaffordable power rates as a result of the Liberal government, the new taxes that have been snuck in by this Liberal government since 2003 are also out of control and are an added burden, again, to many of our senior citizens.

Our seniors have many needs that we on this side of the House feel the Liberals continue to blatantly ignore. It is especially shameful that you're continuing to neglect the needs of our senior citizens while you are at the same time able and willing to provide billions of dollars to bail out the mostly empty MaRS office tower in downtown Toronto and on scandals like eHealth, Ornge and gas plants.

I have to say that I'm very worried about the number of calls and visits I get in my constituency office from senior citizens who come in to tell me they're in debt because of the rising cost of living in Ontario. It's an absolute shame. This is the same generation of people who taught us how to stand on our own two feet and the same generation who never believed in carrying a lot of debt but are now, sadly, paying for it. Shame on this government for letting them down.

We absolutely have to do better to meet the needs of our seniors. One of those critical needs is long-term-care beds. These troubling facts are the reason why: 1.6 million seniors live in Ontario. I ask, what's going to happen in 2028, when the number of seniors in Ontario doubles?



Seventy thousand of our seniors are housed across 625 long-term-care homes; 22,000 are still waiting for a bed; they wait an average of 109 days; 60% of them don't get their first choice of facility in their community. Here's the kicker: Our senior residents receive only \$5.46 a day for food, while prison inmates receive about \$10.

We know for a fact that for years this government actually froze construction of new long-term-care beds and put no shovels in the ground, leaving seniors to live in hospitals or, worse still, without help of any kind as there are no vacant beds. This is simply unacceptable. As a result, about 4,700 frail, elderly people remain in hospital beds today, due to a shortage of long-term-care beds or home services. The situation is critical.

We also know for a fact that the Liberal government's \$1.1-billion home care plan from three years ago has not helped. Wait-lists have grown, leaving more seniors in need of long-term care at home and thousands more taking up hospital beds with nowhere to go.

I believe the minister referenced a prior redevelopment project from 2006, and I just want to add to her comment—or rather clarify, perhaps—that the redevelopment of those beds was mostly done under the previous PC government back in 1998.

Recently, I had the opportunity to review an investigative piece by Metroland that yielded even more disturbing facts about the state of long-term care in Ontario. That investigation into Ontario's LTC found that “there are as many as 160 distinct steps, including accessing nine separate databases, just to move a senior from hospital into a long-term-care bed in Ontario. Bureaucracy is such an obstruction that consultants to industry in the US ... are being retained to help streamline the process of moving seniors into Ontario nursing homes.”

Mr. Speaker, we will stand very diligently on this side of the House to ensure that our seniors receive the care and respect they deserve. We'll remain diligent until that happens, and we plead with the government to step up and really do what they've said. They talk a good game. They've re-talked a good game. We need them to do that.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'm pinch-hitting today for our health and long-term care critic, France Gélinas, who could not be here.

Do we need redevelopment of long-term-care beds in this province? Yes, we do. However, this is like a regurgitated announcement. On July 31, 2007, Dalton McGuinty and George Smitherman announced that this Liberal government would redevelop 35,000 long-term-care beds within 10 years. In 2009, the Liberal government launched a Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy, promising to develop 35,000 beds—the same 35,000 beds—by 2019.

According to the Ontario Long Term Care Association, as of 2013, only 4,000 of those 35,000 have been approved for redevelopment, well below the 7,000 every-two-years target. With only five years left in the original timeline, the government is a long way from delivering on its promise and commitment to seniors by 2019.

Locally, in my riding, in 2007 George Smitherman announced 96 new long-term-care beds, which are

desperately needed, as we've heard from the PC member. It's now 2014. There is not a shovel in the ground. The licences have been awarded twice, both times to for-profit operators. They should actually have been awarded to a non-profit operator called Foyer Richelieu in Welland, a 60-bed, non-profit home, well respected in the community, related to Club Richelieu, which has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for superior care for residents in Welland over the years. They should have gotten those beds. Unfortunately, they didn't.

Now there are secret deals being made at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to sell off 75 non-profit beds at the Welland hospital site of the NHS to the same operator that got awarded the 96 beds just last year—even though it's kind of in violation of the ministry's own policy that non-profit beds should go to the non-profit sector.

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There are 22,000 people on the wait-list. They're waiting for beds. Recently families have received notices that respite care from their CCACs is going to end, so we're going to actually need more beds in this province.

I can tell you that people don't really care about a frilly political announcement about redeveloping beds that they've announced seven or eight times. What they care about is that they have a bed when they need a bed, that they have a bed in their community and not in some community 100 kilometres away.

Their families want to make sure that the residents have nutritious foods, good-quality foods, foods that enhance the palate for seniors who have waning appetites.

What they want is to ensure that people have good activity programs, that they have physiotherapy in those nursing homes and that they have social programs that actually keep seniors from falling into depression, as so many of them do.

What they want is to be able to actually visit their family. What they want is more staffing hours so that their loved ones are supervised and protected from the physical attacks and potential deaths that have been experienced in our nursing homes across this province because there have not been enough staffing hours to ensure the safety of our residents.

Residents and families don't care about political announcements that never happen, year after year. They don't know why your redevelopment plans for 30,000 beds have failed. What they want is a guarantee, when they can no longer care for their parent or adult child—as is becoming the norm in our nursing homes—that they'll be safe, that they'll have good, adequate personal and nursing care, and that they can live the remaining time in their lives with dignity and respect.

## PETITIONS

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I support it, will affix my name and send it with page Colston.

## AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a healthy connection to our food system is vital to the health and environmental, social and economic well-being of all people in Ontario;

"Whereas too many young people in Ontario do not have access to nutritious food and grow up without basic food literacy or food skills;

"Whereas food bank use in Ontario is at an all-time high and over 412,000 individuals every month cannot afford to feed themselves or their families;

"Whereas poor diet and lack of access to nutritious foods is a leading cause of poor health and growing health care costs in our province;

"Whereas urban sprawl and poor planning continue to destroy valuable farmland, water resources and local food systems;

"Whereas sustained investment in local food and increased support for Ontario-grown foods will strengthen our food and farming sector and create jobs in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That this government strengthen the Local Food Act as part of a broader provincial strategy to put food first;

"That the government develop a provincial strategy that recognizes the importance of food to our environment, health and social and economic well-being."

I agree. I'm going to sign it and give it to Darren to be delivered to the table.

## ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I'll affix my signature and have Alex deliver it to the desk.

## LANDFILL

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and the quality of life for all future generations;

"Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which will have significant human and financial costs for;

"Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents' physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being;

"Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

"Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental...;

"Whereas the county of Oxford has passed a resolution requesting a moratorium on landfill construction or approval;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:



"To implement a moratorium in Oxford county on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

"That this review of alternatives would give special emphasis on (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods which can efficiently and practically be recycled or reused so as to not require disposal in landfills."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition. I will affix my signature.

### BEDBUGS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario cut \$5 million of funding for municipalities to help eradicate bedbugs;

"Whereas reports of bedbug infestations continue to increase in Toronto and across Ontario;

"Whereas bedbug infestations can cause significant amounts of distress, shame, panic, anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns and affect anyone, anywhere regardless of where you live, how much money you make, or how clean you keep your home;

"Whereas the government of Ontario's recent cuts to the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit—a fund that was critical to people on social assistance who found themselves without furniture and bedding after a bedbug infestation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario restores the full \$5-million fund to assist with the eradication of bedbugs and implement a comprehensive bedbug strategy for Ontario."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign this and give this to Raveon to be delivered.

### SCHOOL TRUSTEES

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial code of conduct governs every school board in Ontario;

"Whereas the provincial code of conduct provides directions for the creation and implementation of the code of conduct for all school boards;

"Whereas subsection 301(1) of part XIII of the Education Act states that 'the minister may establish a code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools';

"Whereas the current provincial code of conduct does not explicitly state the trustees are also required to adhere to this code of conduct;

"Whereas the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustees held a planning and priorities committee meeting on October 1, 2014;

"Whereas some members of the planning and priorities committee behaved unprofessionally and made racial overtone remarks at the October 1, 2014, meeting; and

"Whereas some members of the planning and priorities committee violated both the provincial code of conduct and the TDSB code of conduct;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly amend subsection 301(1) of part XIII of the Education Act to explicitly state the code of conduct also applies to trustees; and

"That members of the Legislative Assembly amend current provincial code of conduct to explicate the conduct and behaviours of trustees."

I fully support the petition. I'll give my petition to page Ben.

1350

### ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board is a provincial agency composed of unelected members unaccountable to Ontarians; and

"Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board has the power to unilaterally alter local development decisions made by municipalities and their communities; and

"Whereas the city of Toronto is the largest city in Ontario; and

"Whereas the city of Toronto has a planning department composed of professional planners, an extensive legal department and 44 full-time city councillors directly elected by its citizens; and

"Whereas Toronto's city council voted overwhelmingly ... to request an exemption from the Ontario Municipal Board's jurisdiction;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the ability of the city of Toronto to handle its own urban planning and development; and

"Further, that the Ontario Municipal Board no longer have jurisdiction over the city of Toronto."

I agree with this petition. I'm going to sign it and give it to Josée to be delivered to the table.

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition. I give my petition to page Marie-Thérèse.

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of people, not only from Oxford but from around the province.

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity, and I do want to affix my signature.

### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

"Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

"Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

"Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

"That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route."

I couldn't agree more. I add my name to the thousands and give it to Raveen to be delivered to the table.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I have a good one here, and it is also to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

"Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

"Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

"Whereas the environment minister"—or former environment minister—"has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions, but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

"Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false 'fails', which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships,



thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and I have signed it and will send it down to the table with page Félix.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Enbridge Canada is proposing to reverse the flow of the Line 9 pipeline in order to transport western oil and tar sands oil through the most densely populated parts of Ontario;

"Whereas this pipeline project proposes changes to the pipeline that merit serious consideration, like the increase in oil carrying capacity and the transport of significantly more corrosive oil through the pipeline;

"Whereas this pipeline passes under cities and major rivers and a spill would risk the drinking water and health of millions of Ontarians and cause permanent damage to ecosystems;

"Whereas Line 9's reversal will have impacts that must be analyzed beyond the National Energy Board hearings held by the federal government;

"Whereas the government of Quebec has already indicated its intention to conduct an independent review of the line reversal impact, including the flow of oil sands crude into Quebec;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario acts in the best interest of the health and environment of the province and conduct a full environmental assessment of Enbridge's proposed Line 9 reversal and capacity expansion projects."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign this and give this to Gregory to be delivered to the table.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

Mrs. Martins moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month/ Projet de loi 28, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois du patrimoine hispanique.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all the respected guests who are joining us in the gallery today: Duberlis Ramos, Claudia Montoya, Margarita Feliciano, Oscar Vigil, Claudio Ruiz, Angel de los Santos Vargas, Gabriella Gonzales and Eduardo Harari. Thank you all.

These individuals are only but a few who work tirelessly to promote the contributions of the Hispanic community in Ontario and in Canada. They publish Spanish- and English-language newspapers. They run cultural centres that welcome newcomers to our province. Everything these individuals do is dedicated to providing the incredible sense of cohesion that makes the Hispanic community so dynamic. Thank you all for your hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very glad they're all here today as we read my private member's bill, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month, for the second time.

As a Portuguese Canadian, I feel a strong connection with Spanish speakers. Descendants of the Iberian Peninsula certainly hold similar traditions. Growing up and living in Toronto has only brought this point closer to home. I feel privileged that I've known prominent members of the Hispanic community for many years.

1400

My riding of Davenport has a large Hispanic population. Since I was elected in June, I've had the opportunity to represent the Premier and the Liberal Party at a number of Hispanic events in my riding and across the city. In July, I attended the incredible Salsa on St. Clair festival. The festival ran for an entire week and included cultural events, delicious food, arts exhibits and, of course, lots of salsa dancing. I was also given the opportunity to speak at the 33rd annual Hispanic Fiesta at Mel Lastman Square. It was a remarkable day, and I'd like to acknowledge Mr. Fernando Valladares, who co-founded this event 33 years ago and is still instrumental in its operation and growth all these years later. His Las Flores charitable organization, based in my riding of Davenport, does amazing work across Ontario and in Central and South America.

At the beginning of September, the Mexican-Canadian community welcomed me to two amazing events. I had the privilege of speaking at the Mexican flag-raising ceremony right here at Queen's Park, and at the Viva Mexico festival, which was held outdoors for the first time this year in Earlscourt Park, right in the heart of my amazing riding of Davenport.

By this time, I was starting to see a lot of familiar faces at these events, and relationships that had started off as professional acquaintances began to grow into real friendships.

At the opening of the city of Toronto's Hispanic Heritage Month, I had a long discussion with Luis Ibarra and Steven Wharton, the founders of Latinos magazine,

who will be joining me later this afternoon for a reception. I saw them again the week after at the Ibero-American Gala consular event, along with many other guests.

I am touched and humbled by the warm welcome I have received from the Hispanic community since my election, and beforehand, actually. At this point, I really feel like an adopted daughter to this community, and for this I'm very grateful. Muchas gracias.

Attending these events over the summer and fall also helped me understand the community better and confirmed for me that the Hispanic community, very much like the Portuguese community, is dedicated, warm, welcoming and very engaged.

Hispanic Canadians, like many other immigrant communities, are committed to recognizing and celebrating their heritage. That's why it's so important for me to champion this cause and to be a voice for Hispanic Canadians at Queen's Park.

Peoples of Hispanic origin have made and continue to make significant contributions to the world. The masterpieces of Frida Kahlo and Salvador Dali hold a unique influence over the world of art. The late, great Gabriel García Márquez authored some of the most fantastic literary works of the 20th century. Of course, the great tenor Plácido Domingo's musical influence is impressive. Justice Sonia Sotomayor of the United States Supreme Court has inspired Hispanic people around the world by breaking down barriers in the legal profession.

The rich contributions of these giants of the Hispanic community are well known around the world. However, we must recognize the outstanding achievements and lasting influences of the Hispanic people right here in Ontario.

The Hispanic community in Canada was established in earnest at the turn of the 20th century. In 1914, 2,000 Spanish migrants settled in Canada, largely from the poor, overpopulated countryside of the Canary Islands, Galicia and Santander. The Hispanic Canadian population experienced only marginal growth until well after the Second World War.

The first substantial surge in Hispanic immigration came during the 1970s, a time of great socio-economic turbulence across Spanish-speaking countries. During this period, the so-called Andean wave saw an influx of Latin American immigrants from countries like Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. At the same time, an epidemic of military coups and domestic conflict spread across countries such as Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador and Argentina. These events, combined with Canada's open-door immigration policy, brought an estimated 68,000 newcomers from Hispanic countries during this decade.

Armed conflict in the 1980s in countries such as Nicaragua and Panama promoted another influx of immigrants, largely from Central America.

Lastly, since the 1990s, Hispanic immigration has been characterized as a "professional wave" of Spanish-speaking individuals travelling to Canada to study and to work. Life in Canada was quite challenging for those

who came during the initial waves. In particular, language barriers often made the transition to Canadian society difficult. These early immigrants experienced a loss of income, unemployment and, in many cases, racism and discrimination.

Because of these difficulties, Hispanic Canadians began to gather in certain hubs around the province such as Toronto's Kensington Market, which has always been a space for many new immigrants from many different countries. Despite emigrating from a number of nations, each with their own distinct customs, Spanish speakers offered each other a sense of community.

Recently, the Hispanic community has exploded in size and become one of the most prominent ethnic communities in the country. It is now estimated that there are approximately half a million Canadians of Hispanic origin. Some estimates put this population substantially higher when you include non-citizens and permanent residents. In my riding of Davenport alone there are approximately 10,000 citizens of Hispanic origin. Not only this, but the Hispanic community is also one of the fastest-growing populations in the entire country. Between 1996 and 2001 the number of Hispanic peoples in Canada increased by 32% while the overall population grew by only 4% during the same period.

Stats Canada also estimates that close to 40% of all Hispanic immigrants came in the last 20 years. Spanish continues to be Canada's most spoken language after English and French, and has been the fastest-growing foreign language spoken by Canadians since 2001.

It's hard to argue with the fact that the influence of this population on our province is immense. Almost 50% of Hispanic Canadians have at least a bachelor's degree, and another 12% have a non-university diploma. What's more, the Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce estimates the economic input of Latin American businesses on the Toronto-area economy between \$49.2 million and \$73.8 million.

I'd like to now tell the story of someone who truly embodies the rich contributions of the Hispanic community to our province. In 1886, Alberto Guerrero was born in La Serena, Chile. Guerrero was a leading figure in the vibrant Chilean music scene and was a conductor of the country's first symphony orchestra. In 1918, Guerrero moved to Toronto with his family to teach at the Hambourg Conservatory of Music. Guerrero was said to have single-handedly brought the music of modern 20th century composers to Canada, being the first to perform the music of Ravel, Debussy and Schoenberg. Guerrero extended Chile's musical culture to Canada and grew to become the most important music teacher in the country. He mentored young Canadian pianists, including Glenn Gould, arguably Canada's most celebrated classical pianist. Indeed, many have gone on to say that Guerrero is the unsung progenitor of our nation's musical culture.

Guerrero's story is but one of many examples of the outstanding contributions which Hispanic Canadians have woven into the multicultural fabric of our province. The young professional working for a start-up in Water-



loo, the banker on Bay Street, the vendor in Kensington Market, the community organizer in Ottawa, and the barber on Finch—all of these Hispanic Canadians work to make Ontario a better and brighter place to live.

It is precisely these stories that make it important to declare October Hispanic Heritage Month. This commemoration provides our province with an opportunity to recognize and praise the outstanding accomplishments of this community. We as a province must pay tribute to the culture that binds together Spanish speakers. We must educate future generations about the hard work, sacrifices and the important role the Hispanic community has played in the building of our province.

We've discussed similar initiatives at Queen's Park before. In December 2009, a motion was introduced to declare April Hispanic Heritage Month. The Hansard shows records of a lively debate on that motion, with supportive comments coming from all parties.

#### 1410

This year, however, with the encouragement of the Hispanic community, my bill identifies October as Hispanic Heritage Month. As the preamble to the bill notes, October is a significant month for the Hispanic community. Around the world, Hispanic countries share and celebrate their culture in October.

This year, the city of Toronto joined many other jurisdictions and declared October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Make no mistake: This is an important bill. In 2014, it can be easy to accept our province's multiculturalism as a foregone conclusion, and if you think back even 20 or 30 years, it's impressive how far we've come. But it makes it—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to add my comments to the debate here this afternoon. I'd like to thank my colleague from across the aisle, the MPP from Davenport, for bringing this bill forward. I saw last week when you introduced the bill, and I was looking forward to the chance to speak here this afternoon.

As the explanatory note mentions, "Hispanic-Canadians represent a dynamic community that has made" an important contribution "to the growth and prosperity of the province of Ontario..."

"By proclaiming ... October as Hispanic Heritage Month ... the province" will recognize "the rich contributions of Hispanic-Canadians" to the fabric of Ontario.

"Hispanic Heritage Month" will be "an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements and contributions of Hispanic people in the province." I agree with these sentiments.

As the MPP for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and as the opposition critic for citizenship, immigration and

international trade, it has been my privilege to attend many events that celebrate Ontario's cultural diversity, from the Taste of the Danforth in Toronto to the Ottawa Turkish Festival to Slovenian celebrations and Ukrainian Heritage Day celebrations, and, of course, the many ceremonies and flag-raising occurring here at Queen's Park on a regular basis. On these occasions, I've been so impressed with how vibrant these communities are, as well as by how engaged people from different backgrounds are in celebrating unique traditions, trying new foods, of course, and learning about the cultures new Canadians bring with them.

Ontario has long been home to a thriving Hispanic community, and over the years all the parties in this House have supported motions and presented petitions to recognize the vital cultural and economic role that this community plays. I'm happy to lend my voice to theirs today, to support formalizing recognition for Hispanic Heritage Month here in Ontario every October. Spanish-speaking communities around the world have adopted October as a time to celebrate their heritage, and it's about time that Ontario joined in these celebrations too.

I want to commend the member of provincial Parliament from Davenport for bringing this bill forward. She is continuing a Davenport tradition, I believe. It was another MPP from Davenport, Tony Ruprecht, who introduced a motion some years ago to proclaim a Hispanic Heritage Month. Of course, it makes sense that recognizing this community is not a new idea. Hundreds of thousands of people have come here from Hispanic countries. Overall, they make up about 11% of our new Canadians.

Many have come here for economic and political reasons, choosing to build a new life in Ontario, and they've enriched our province with their artistic, cultural, economic and scientific achievements and contributions. The rich history of these people and their descendants is something that we should all celebrate.

The Hispanic community in Ontario is highly diverse, made up of people from South America and Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and Spain—23 different countries in all. This month of recognition will give all Ontario residents the opportunity to participate in and learn about the unique history and customs of these countries.

This is also a young and growing community. Almost 40% of all Hispanic immigrants came to Canada within the last 20 years. Of course, members here would know that Spanish is the second-most popular language throughout the world. The knowledge and skills of these Hispanic Canadians will help Ontario grow as they continue to make important contributions to all spheres of our society, as well as strengthen our relationships with our Spanish-speaking friends and trading partners abroad.

There is a laundry list of reasons to support this bill, and I'm looking forward to its speedy passage. Again, I would like to congratulate the member of provincial Parliament from Davenport for bringing this bill forward

and take a moment to urge all members of this assembly to support this bill.

My wife, Kate, and I look forward to celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month each and every October. As it's too early to say *feliz Navidad*, I'll say *feliz Halloween*.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Buenas tardes and good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to start by thanking the member opposite for the opportunity to speak to this bill, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month. Thank you to the other speakers here today as well.

*Remarks in Spanish.*

Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to speak for my time today in Spanish, but I know that in this great chamber we can only speak in French or English. Today, however, that is a shame.

This is a motion to highlight the impact and influence of Hispanic Canadians, to celebrate and share Hispanic culture and heritage, and what better way to do that than in Spanish? I went to high school in California, where I had the opportunity to study Spanish. In addition to the language, we also studied culture and heritage. I was lucky to gain a broader appreciation of a community outside of my own.

Like California, Canada is a place of marvellous diversity and shared stories, and Ontario is a rich and varied province that is only made stronger because of this. Where we have distinct pockets and communities, we find close-knit and traditional centres. Where we have overlapping neighbourhoods and cultures, we have shared learning and growth. We are a stronger province for our histories and cultural stories, and we are strongest when we share them together.

Though it is important that we recognize the many diverse communities in Ontario, let's not forget our mandate to address the issues that affect all communities in every corner of this province. The best way to prove how appreciative we are, as always, is to show it. Actions speak louder than words. Let's recognize the contributions that Hispanic Canadians have made, and will continue to make, to our province by taking action on the issues that affect members of their community and all communities across Ontario.

Of the many reasons that I am proud to call Ontario home, our diversity of language, culture and heritage is perhaps the greatest. Toronto is often heralded as the most diverse city in the world, and today we have the opportunity to recognize a piece of that diversity in a significant and meaningful way.

I should note that this assembly will not be the first to recognize the significant impact that Hispanic Canadians have made to our province. Earlier this year, the city of Toronto officially recognized October as Hispanic Heritage Month within the municipality, and we are pleased to echo that declaration.

As others have said here today, people of Hispanic heritage have a long and rich history in our province. The

preamble to this bill notes that, "As early as 1914, Canadians who originated from the 23 Hispanic countries began immigrating to the province...." That means that this year marks the centennial anniversary of Ontario's Hispanic population and makes the declaration of Hispanic Heritage Month all the more timely.

Diversity of culture is a core Canadian value. It is a core value of New Democrats and a core value of the community I live in, as well. Every June, in my riding of Oshawa, we celebrate Fiesta Week, a week-long multi-cultural festival that gives Durham residents the opportunity to experience various cultures from across the globe and celebrates the richness of our diversity. I invite all the members to join me next summer to experience Fiesta Week themselves as a way to continue to celebrate all of the many cultures that comprise our province and country.

Speaker, I hope that my thoughts have been informed thus far, but also informative as well. Though we have always recognized the impact that Hispanic Canadians have had on our province, it is important that we formalize that recognition as we are here today.

*Remarks in Spanish.*

I am not Latina, but I can appreciate the culture because Hispanic culture is so rich and so big. This month is for the wide Hispanic community, and for all of their friends and neighbours. We want to explore, know and celebrate Hispanic culture and heritage together.

Gracias.

1420

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's a great honour to speak to this bill today. I'd like to first of all congratulate a fellow member of provincial Parliament, from Davenport, for introducing this bill. I look forward to its speedy passage through the House.

I'd like to welcome the esteemed guests we have with us today from the Hispanic community, and I'm going to do my best to introduce you again. I'm afraid my pronunciation is not nearly as good as my fellow members', but I'm going to do my best.

We have with us Duberlis Ramos, Claudia Montoya, Margarita Feliciano, Oscar Vigil, Claudio Ruiz, Angel de los Santos Vargas, Gabriella Gonzales and Eduardo Harari. I hope I got that right. Thank you all for coming, and thank you for all your contributions to our province and our city.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take my couple of minutes to just share with you why I think this is so important, why this is a special bill. My grandparents and my mother were immigrants to Canada. They were not of Hispanic heritage, but my grandfather invested a tremendous amount of time and energy in making sure that I would learn about his ancestral heritage, about my heritage. He wanted to make sure that we not only understood it, but that we understood the history, that we practised the culture, that we spoke the language.

One of things about my grandfather was that he was incredibly proud of his heritage, but he was also a proud



Canadian. In fact, he's the proudest Canadian I've ever known. I remember one day I was sitting with my grandfather and he was teaching me about my heritage. He was teaching me history and literature and those sorts of things. I remember saying to my grandfather after about an hour of discussion, "Grandfather, why do I have to do this? Can we stop?" He said, "You know, Yvan, this is important. It's important that you understand your culture and where you come from, but it's also important that you know the history of the people who came before you, because they are the people who make Canada so great." That is what makes this bill special to me, and that's why I'm honoured to speak to it today.

Today's bill is about two things to me. One, of course, is about celebrating Hispanic heritage and culture, but it is also about celebrating the people who have made, and continue to make, our country and our province so great.

As someone who is the son of immigrants and the grandchild of immigrants, I understand that by celebrating our cultural heritage, we maintain our ties. We show an appreciation for the trailblazers who came before us, including those in our own families who helped build our communities. Hispanic culture has, for a long time, been an important component of our collective identity, both in this city and in this province. The member for Davenport and the others have spoken to that.

While the Hispanic community has a rich history, a rich heritage in our province, this bill aims to recognize not only the cultural contributions of the past but also those of the present. We continue to have the pleasure of taking part in celebrations like the Hispanic Extravaganza, Salsa on St. Clair, the Mexican Festival and Hispanic Heritage Week in Hamilton—and this is just to name a few.

I spoke of the other reason I think this bill is important, and that's to celebrate the accomplishments of the Hispanic community in contributing to Canada and Ontario. The contributions span communities across our province. They're reflected in our economic, political, social and cultural life. Hispanic Canadians have played an important role in the development of Ontario, and they've made it one of the most desirable places in the world to live, and have contributed to making Canada the great country that it is today. It is truly important that we recognize and celebrate these contributions today, Mr. Speaker.

In Etobicoke Centre, my home riding, I have had the pleasure of getting to know many Hispanic Canadians from diverse parts of the world. I look forward to getting to know them and their culture and their contributions even better.

I hope that we can count on the support of all members in this House in passing this important act to celebrate Hispanic culture and heritage, to celebrate the contributions of the Hispanic community to our province, our city and our country. I look forward to celebrating in the years to come, not only the accomplishments of the past but also the accomplishments of the future, in my

riding of Etobicoke Centre, in Ontario and in our great country.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak for a few minutes on Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month. I, too, would like to welcome our guests to the Legislature this afternoon.

I'm already learning a little bit more about the Hispanic culture. I think that's part of the importance of a bill like this that would recognize October as Hispanic Heritage Month, that brings more awareness of the important contributions of Hispanic people to the success of the province of Ontario. Certainly, Ontario is a very diverse province, and that is part of its success. This bill would recognize that important contribution. As has been pointed out, there are 400,000 to 500,000 people of Hispanic origin in the province of Ontario that have made a great contribution.

As was mentioned, in the past there was a private member's motion, I believe, back in 2009, from the former member for Davenport, that recognized April as Hispanic Heritage Month, but October is more in keeping with the time of the year when Hispanic heritage is celebrated around the world. This bill would enshrine in law the recognition and celebration of the contributions made by Canadians of Hispanic origin, but it would also move Hispanic Heritage Month to October every year. As has been mentioned, Toronto city council recently declared that October would be Hispanic Heritage Month as well. So this brings that in line as well with what the city has declared.

I'm pleased to support it. I'm sure other members of our party will be pleased to support this bill as well. I think it brings an opportunity for all Ontarians to learn more about Hispanic culture. I won't make an attempt at speaking Spanish, because I think I'd do a little more disservice to the language if I tried to do so, but just to say that I certainly will be supporting the bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's an honour to be able to add my remarks to this debate today about creating Hispanic Heritage Month in Ontario. In my riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane, there is not a large Hispanic population, but we have some, and I'd specifically like to focus on one individual who has made an incredible contribution to our riding. His name is Martin Melendez.

Martin was born in El Salvador, and he lived in a monastery in El Salvador. That monastery milked cows and made cheese. Martin didn't like milking cows, so Martin made cheese. Martin got very good at making cheese, and he got a scholarship. The priests helped him get a scholarship. He went to Germany to really learn how to make cheese. He travelled around the world diagnosing problems in cheese factories.

Martin came to my riding when the local farming community took over a cheese plant, Thornloe Cheese,

and Martin is the head cheese-maker at Thornloe Cheese. We are in his debt because when the farmers took over Thornloe Cheese, it made two kinds of cheese: It made orange cheddar and white cheddar.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** White cheese and red cheese.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** That's right. But now with Martin's help, Thornloe Cheese makes some of the finest cheeses in the world. They've won cheese championships across Canada, and it's all due to a little boy named Martin Melendez who grew up in a monastery and didn't like milking cows. So for all those people who enjoy Devil's Rock and Evanturel and all the other cheeses that are made by Thornloe Cheese, we would like to thank Martin Melendez and his contribution to the Hispanic contribution to Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** I'm delighted to join the debate and spend three or four minutes on this wonderful piece of legislation introduced by the member from Davenport. I'd like to add my support to the bill. I have to say, I know she did a lot of work in bringing this bill to the Legislature today. I hope that indeed it will receive a speedy passage. I know the member from Davenport spent quite a bit of time in bringing the bill here and in consultation with the local Hispanic community. So we are here debating it. I hope that it will find quick passage because it is the right thing to do.

For me, it's like coming home, if I may say, because as an immigrant myself, we have seen a lot of immigrants coming from other countries, and I am one of those very fortunate people who has a very large population of Hispanic people.

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*Remarks in Spanish.*

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** We have to speak French and English in this House, but I would love to dwell in it. It's such a wonderful language that I think everybody should learn and speak it.

Why is it so important that we recognize and we join in supporting the bill today?

We recognize the contribution, yes, that Hispanic people have made to our country, our province and our neighbourhood. They came here early in the last century, like many others. They didn't have much with them, but they brought with them the spirit, the aspiration and the willingness to look for a job, work hard and make a better future, a better life for their family. They took every opportunity, like all other immigrants. They took every opportunity, and they grew. They grew economically and socially, making this contribution to our nation, our province and our community. So we have to laud the participation and the contribution that they have made and that they continue to make.

They are extremely hard-working people, Speaker, very law-abiding citizens, very lovingly attached to their families and to their culture. Thank goodness Canada offers us the wonderful opportunity to join in and celebrate with other cultures our own and theirs as well. This is what makes us bigger, richer, as a country.

Let me say that in my particular riding of York West, I have people from Chile, Peru, Colombia, Honduras, South America, whatever—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Including Mexico, indeed.

As a matter of fact, I promoted one of the first indoor—una marchetta, Latina's, if you will, the Latin market at 9 Milvan Drive. I'm sure that a lot of people know it. You will find everything you want in that particular place. It's wonderful. You go there on a Sunday or a Saturday afternoon, Speaker, and you can eat fresh empanada, paella and anything else that your heart wishes to eat.

**Interjection:** It's making us hungry.

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** It makes everybody hungry, absolutely.

So I love the language, I love the music, I love the culture, and of course, we love the Spanish people. They have enriched our society in a very special way. We wish them well. I wish the member for Davenport well in the passage of this bill.

God bless all the Hispanic and Latino community for their contribution to our country. Thank you and congratulations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On behalf of New Democrats, I want to welcome our visitors to the House today. It's wonderful to see you here. Certainly, we New Democrats support this. There's no question about that.

I want to give a shout-out to the member from Oshawa. Who knew? You never know the skills of your own members until a bill like this comes forward.

Of course, thanks to the member from Davenport for bringing it forward. It's always a joy to speak to bills like this because it gives us a chance to speak about the wonderful contributions of so many people from, really, all over the world who end up residing in Ontario or Toronto.

I'm from Parkdale-High Park, so of course we have a number of Hispanics. But like my friend from Timiskaming-Cochrane, I want to talk about two of them, Paula and Blanca; I'll call them that.

Before I was a politician—I still am a United Church minister in charge of a church on Roncesvalles. I have to tell you, the very first legalized same-sex marriage in Ontario, before the law changed, I had the honour and privilege of performing. Guess who it was between? Two Hispanic women, Paula and Blanca from Colombia. They were incredible women, and I just want to herald them, because to have stepped forward at that time in that way on that issue and to have declared their love for each other and for me to have presided over it was a great honour. I can tell you, the party afterwards was phenomenal too. They were incredible social justice activists, not only around the issue of same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights, but also around all rights.

It's interesting that just while you were sitting here, I was reading petitions from Davenport and from



Parkdale—High Park on a whole lot of issues, on issues that actually have been fought for by all of my Hispanic residents, things like clean trains running through our riding, things like affordable housing—we have a number of Hispanics waiting on housing lists; 70,000 families and counting in downtown Toronto—things like food programs for children. Our Hispanic community has always been at the forefront of all social justice issues. Every one of those petitions that I read today and handed in had a Hispanic name on it.

I just want to say that the great contribution in my riding that our Hispanics have made is toward the issues of social justice. Thank you for being our conscience. It's wonderful that you have wonderful music; we all know about that. It's wonderful that you have great food; I love paella. It's wonderful for all of those things, but I want to thank you for being really at the front of many social justice movements. Certainly, coming from the countries that you do, you know first-hand what happens if you don't, and you bring that message forward to us.

I grew up, of course, on the tail of the Spanish Civil War. My Colombian and Chilean friends—in fact, Romero, probably listening right now, one of our staff people in the New Democratic Party, comes from Chile and brings that whole history with him. To hear and to know those histories and to welcome you to this country is to welcome a great wealth of knowledge.

My suggestion to all of us here is to eat the food, to dance to the music, but actually engage your residents and hear the stories of the politics and the history of the places they come from. Because it's politics and history like that that informs our politics and will make our history with you together.

So thank you for being here. Of course, we're going to support this; there's no question about that. Of course it's going to pass; we all support it. Again, thank you for your contribution to not only Ontario but Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am very pleased to add my support to Bill 28, the Hispanic Heritage Month Act, which has been brought forward by my colleague the MPP from Davenport. I am delighted to work together with her and with all the members of this Legislature to ensure that October becomes the month that will identify the Hispanic community in Ontario. I would like to thank all those who are here in support of the bill today.

Christopher Columbus first reached America on October 12, 1492. That day is better known to the Hispanic community as el Día de la Raza. It has been mentioned before by my colleagues that October has always been an important month for the Hispanic community coming from Central and Latin America that started to identify the celebration of their history and their culture with this month.

We have spoken about the history of the Hispanic community here in Canada, but the big wave, I think, came in the 1970s. Since the 1970s, from a tiny group of pioneering Spanish and Latin American immigrants, we

now have a very vibrant community that resides here. Ontario is now home to over 400,000 first-, second-, and third-generation Canadians of Hispanic origin. Many of them made a lot of sacrifices when they first came; it's a typical immigrant story. But a lot of them worked hard to build a better future for themselves, their kids and their families. It's the same reason that we all came from distant parts of the world, but the Spanish, I think, have always shown great passion in everything they do, and I think we see that in the contributions they have given to our province and our country.

I have the privilege to represent the area of York South—Weston here in Toronto, and I am much honoured to say that I have a great Hispanic community that lives and works within the riding I represent. We have great residents, great businesses, great organizations and great restaurants. Just to mention a few, we have Las Americas and Rancho Latino. We have great organizations, such as the York Hispanic Centre, which provides a lot of services to newcomers and to the community. Several other organizations don't only serve the Hispanic community but have built programs that serve the Hispanic community, because there are a great number of them and they continue to grow within my riding and in the city of Toronto.

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Needless to say, as has been said before, they have contributed and they continue to contribute a lot to the fabric of our society. They bring us art, music and history. They bring us not only food and sports, but all things that we can enjoy. This bill is important because it's an opportunity not only for the community to celebrate their culture, but also for us to learn more about Hispanic history and culture, and for the future generations. It's really important to pass on all that culture to the future generation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Muchas gracias.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I would like to touch on an area that really hasn't been discussed about this particular bill. I'm thrilled that it's come forward. I'm very supportive.

Don't forget the sacrifices that the Hispanic community has made in labour. Let's talk about countries like Mexico, or in South America, where they were actually tortured, arrested, for having unions. The Hispanic community is a brave community. In our steelworkers' union, we have sheltered some of their leaders in Canada and helped them go back—one of them has even returned to Mexico, putting his life on the line to rejoin his union brothers and sisters in the mining industry in Mexico and in South America. The bravery is unbelievable, and they're such kind people. They're honest, hard-working people. I admire their bravery for standing up to these tyrants, these governments and some of these large corporations that try to get concessions from them and have them work for nothing.

It's unbelievable. The history has not been talked about enough—how they stood up to these tyrants. I'd

like to thank them for their bravery. I'd like to thank them for their leadership in the labour movement. We will be with you, brothers and sisters.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

I now recognize the member for Davenport. You have two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I'd like to say to everyone: *Remarks in Spanish.* Thank you all for your support.

I'd like to acknowledge the members from York West, Etobicoke Centre and York South–Weston for their fine remarks this afternoon, along with the members opposite whose support of this bill is greatly appreciated: from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Oshawa, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Parkdale–High Park and Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Gracias a todos.

Make no mistake: This is an important bill. In 2014, it can be easy to accept our province's multiculturalism as a foregone conclusion. If you think back even 20 or 30 years, it's impressive to see how far we've come. Just look around at the wide variety of cultures and ethnicities represented in the chamber. It is incredibly heartening.

The importance of the Hispanic Canadian community here in Ontario should not go unnoticed, and October's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration will be a fantastic opportunity to recognize the achievements of a community that is growing greater and greater in prominence.

We all understand the value of staying connected with our communities, and in the diaspora, events such as Hispanic Heritage Month are really an opportunity to pause and reflect on our cultural backgrounds. This bill encourages just that.

I'm incredibly proud to live in such a diverse and multicultural province. Active and engaged communities here in Toronto and across the province strengthen Ontario enormously, culturally and economically. I ask that we push this bill along—as the member opposite said, a speedy process to push this bill along—so that we may work to proclaim October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Thank you to all the members who joined me in supporting this bill here today. Muchas gracias. And thank you to all those who came out today to represent the great community that is the Hispanic community in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

## MANUFACTURING MONTH

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, in order to celebrate, with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the contribution of Ontario's manufacturing sector, which contributes over \$75 billion to Ontario's gross domestic product; October in each year should be recognized as manufacturing month.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I rise today in the House to continue our government's ongoing support for a critical sector—our province's manufacturing sector. Our government understands the importance that the manufacturing sector has on all regions of the province, direct and indirect.

If you talk to the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, they will tell you one of their biggest concerns is those who talk down the growth in the manufacturing sector since the global recession. The official opposition seems to have mastered this skill. Talking down the growth in the sector since the global recession is what they do best.

This is something that our government simply will not do. This is something that I simply will not do. This is something the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure will not do either. We understand how vitally important this sector is, and we also understand how important the sector's growth since the recession is. In fact, my private member's resolution will demonstrate our government's ongoing support for the manufacturing sector.

Throughout the entirety of my political career, I have been nothing but supportive of Ontario's manufacturing sector. The resolution I bring forward to the House reflects my political career, which has been extremely supportive of this crucial sector.

By following in the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters' footsteps, my resolution would proclaim October as Manufacturing Month here in Ontario. By doing this, the government and opposition, present and future, will be reminded each October of the importance of the sector. I would ask the members across the aisle to support my resolution.

There are currently 740,000 Ontarians who are directly employed in this sector, meaning there are 740,000 different families that are dependent on this sector for their livelihood. This type of proclamation is one of the types of support the industry is looking for.

This government has taken significant measures to sustain and create jobs. We are enhancing the competitiveness of Ontario's manufacturing sector, including comprehensive tax reform, expanding electricity rate mitigation programs and supporting private sector investments.

Supporting private sector investments through the regional economic development funds is one of the many ways that our government has supported this sector. These funds contribute over 90% of investments to the manufacturing sector. Since 2008, our government has strategically invested over \$120 million to these funds. These investments have leveraged over \$1 billion from the private sector. These funds have helped support over 27,500 jobs across southwestern and eastern Ontario.

I'd like to talk a bit about KPMG's independent report on the success of these funds. Their findings concluded that these funds' investments "meet and often exceed job creation objectives." As I said, 90% of these funds are being focused on the manufacturing sector.



I am really happy that our government introduced and fostered such successful partnerships with private sector manufacturers through these funds. That is why, during the start of the recession, when the manufacturing sector was feeling the squeeze of the global recession, our government stood with our manufacturers and created these funds.

I would like to remind the official opposition of their stance towards these funds. Not only did the PCs vote against both the southwestern and eastern regional development funds, but they stalled their formation. They were stalling the support the government was giving to the manufacturing sector when it was most needed. I don't need to go into detail about how these short-term political games that the PCs were playing were distracting from what was and is important: continuing to grow our manufacturing sector. Our government has its priorities straight. We have and will continue to support Ontario's manufacturing sector.

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To give the House an understanding of the magnitude of this sector and for the PCs to know what they voted against, I'd like to read some stats. The sector directly employs 740,000 Ontarians and contributes over \$75 billion to our province's GDP. Within the provincial economy, manufacturing accounts for about 12% of Ontario's total employment. That is, more than one in 10 Ontarians is employed in this sector. The sector represents roughly 11% of the province's GDP. That is just to give the House a sense of the magnitude of the sector.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** To break down the sector more so we all understand the importance, I would like everyone to understand that Ontario is among the top jurisdictions for vehicle production in North America. The auto industry supports 400,000 direct and indirect jobs alone. In June of 2009, the auto sector's employment was at a low of 80,000 members. We've seen an increase of over 18,000 net new jobs, and this is an incredible feat.

Our government has been there for the auto manufacturing sector as well. Since 2003, our government has invested over \$800 million in this sector, and that has leveraged over \$10 billion from the private sector. Our government has been the most supportive to the sector in Ontario's history. We have made many investments in Ontario's auto sector where it makes sense; for example: \$100 million for the Oakville assembly complex in 2004, \$98 million for the Essex engine plant in 2010, and almost \$70.9 million for an additional investment in Oakville in 2013 to modernize and provide a global platform in that plant for decades to come. Since 2003, we have made strategic investments with all five auto assemblers in Ontario as well as numerous auto parts manufacturing companies across the province.

When the PCs said, "Just let those plants close" during the recession, our government stood by Ontario's auto sector. Now there are 400,000 people directly and indirectly employed in the sector who are grateful that we

supported them when the PCs wanted to put them out of work. We remain committed to partnering with business on future proposals that provide sustainable economic benefits to Ontarians.

There is more to Ontario's manufacturing sector than just its strong auto manufacturing sector: Fourteen of the top 25 global aerospace companies have operations here in Ontario; 50 % of Canada's defence industry employment and revenue is from Ontario; Sarnia-Lambton is Canada's largest chemical and allied manufacturing cluster, recognized as Chemical Valley; seven out of the top 10 global chemical companies have operations in Ontario; 80% of Canada's steel production capacity is located right here in Ontario. I hope all these examples demonstrate the importance of this industry and why proclaiming October as Manufacturing Month is important.

As we know, there has been tremendous growth in the sector since the recession. There is also a consensus among experts that this growth will continue. For instance, in August of this year, auto sales increased to over 171,000 more units sold compared to just one year ago. Experts at TD Bank said on July 8, "Looking out over the next 12-18 months, we expect ... broad based gains in manufacturing output." The Bank of Montreal had a very similar outlook for the sector: "The stronger US economy/weaker loonie combination is a clear positive one-two punch for Ontario exports and manufacturing." CIBC is predicting growth as well: "Ontario is poised to be the single biggest beneficiary ... of sturdy US growth." I want to elaborate on what was said in CIBC's report. In an April 1, 2014, report, CIBC economists ranked the manufacturing subsectors that are best-positioned to regain a position in key export markets and better integrate into global supply-chain opportunities, and Ontario has strong positioning. Eight of the top 10 ranked subsectors—primary metals, machinery, aerospace, computers and electronics, plastics, rubber, fabricated metals, and electrical equipment—are located right here in Ontario.

This sector is well diversified across a wide range of subsectors, and this government has done a lot to support Ontario's manufacturing sector. I believe strongly that proclaiming each October as Manufacturing Month in Ontario will help remind our government and future governments how important this sector is for our province. I would strongly encourage each opposition party to support this resolution.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for York-Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by saying how pleased I am to lend my support to this resolution. However, having listened to the member go on a diatribe here about what, in his view, has been the position taken by this party leaves me somewhat surprised, given the actual facts.

Manufacturing is a crucial industry to our province, contributing \$75 billion to Ontario's GDP. As an economic driver and job creator, our manufacturing industry

deserves both respect and support. Unfortunately, this industry has encountered challenges in the last few years. In 2013 alone, Ontario lost 33,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector, and in the last decade the sector has lost 300,000 jobs. The industry is shrinking, especially relative to the rest of the province's economy. In 2002, manufacturing contributed more than 20% of Ontario's GDP, but by 2013 this number had shrunk to 12%.

Since 2003, the Liberal government has failed the manufacturing sector. I know that one of the most difficult challenges is the skyrocketing cost of energy, which has deeply affected the way in which businesses are able to operate. Many in the manufacturing sector are packing up and finding more affordable places to do business, including Caterpillar, Stelco, John Deere, Campbell Soup and Ford, just to name a few. In a statement this past July, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters said, "Manufacturers are facing tough economic times and rising energy costs which are hurting their ability to compete...."

If the Liberals wanted to help our manufacturing industry, they would make Ontario a more friendly place to do business. Instead, years of waste and mismanagement have forced upon both Ontario residents and businesses increased costs, such as the global adjustment cost on energy bills. This is a surcharge as a result of over a decade of Liberal failures in our energy sector. Such pet projects have only increased costs for families and businesses, and have done nothing to help Ontario's economy. Charging more for energy when all of our neighbours are becoming more competitive is the wrong direction.

There is one other issue I would like to bring up, and I'm glad the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters have highlighted this as well in their July statement. The Liberals' proposed retirement pension plan is worrisome to businesses large and small, and the manufacturing sector is no exception. In their statement, the CME wrote, "While we support efforts to increase retirement income security, we're very concerned about the costs associated with the proposed ... plan. These costs will hit small and medium-sized manufacturers hardest, the job creators. It will ... impact low-income Ontarians that may not have the disposable income to afford mandatory contributions."

Mr. Speaker, I've expressed these sentiments as well, and I applaud the CME for speaking out about the new payroll tax the Liberals are going to impose on business in 2017. I hope that the Liberals take these comments into consideration.

I'd like to thank the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters for the important work they do to advocate for the manufacturing industry, and would like to recognize the industry for their contributions in our province. It is time that we properly recognize this industry, and hopefully, making October Manufacturing Month will be the Liberals' first step to making real change.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I am certainly pleased to rise to speak on the Manufacturing Month of October. I think this motion is very important. Many of you know that I come from a background in the manufacturing sector. In fact, I spent my entire adult life working in the manufacturing sector, most recently as president of Unifor Local 199.

If anything, I think this motion's wording underestimates the importance of our province's manufacturing and exporting sector, including our auto, forestry, steel and agricultural sectors. It is more than just \$75 billion a year that is contributed to Ontario. Many people in those sectors have decent, safe and secure jobs. They're citizens who pay income tax, property tax, buy our cars and contribute to our economy. When they have good jobs, they have strong purchasing power.

The auto sector, where I come from, accounts for \$53 billion, or about 12% of the nation's total exports. It nearly doubles the exports from forestry and agriculture, and is a quarter more than mining. Canadian workers build 5,800 vehicles a day and export them. This all trickles down, from export sales all the way to the \$468 million a year these workers pay in municipal taxes for social services. These workers pay into our health care and our education. When these workers lose work, their communities lose this money.

So you can see how important the manufacturing and exporting sectors are, not just to me personally, but to this province and this country as a whole.

But I'm amazed, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that this would be put forward by this government. I want you to consider for a moment that this motion is being put forward in the same week that the Liberal government is watching Ford pull its plan for a plant that would build 1.5-litre engines to power small vehicles. Instead of setting up in Windsor, they're going to Mexico.

This motion seeks to celebrate with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

Ford was clear: They needed a deal from the Ontario government that would make it reasonable for them to set up a plant in Windsor. When the province didn't do this, Ford decided to ship those plans to Mexico. That means 1,000 jobs that could have gone to people right here in Ontario instead are being shipped south.

There's nothing for the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters to be happy about. It's certainly not something that the 483 workers who are on layoff in Windsor are happy about.

These aren't people who can be fooled by a quick motion that offers them a pat on the back. The auto industry is one of the major players in the Ontario economy and the economy of the entire country. It represents 112,000 people in Canada who pump \$6.1 billion into the economy, a large portion of that right here in Ontario, yet over the last 10 years all they have seen is jobs disappear. They're the men and women who make manufacturing and exporting happen in this province, and they're not happy with the state of the auto industry. They aren't bad workers; let's not blame the workers here. In fact, they're



highly qualified, highly productive and the highest skilled in the industrial world. If you talk to any manufacturer, they'll tell you that Canadian auto workers are the best.

I say to this government: You should invest in our manufacturing and exporting sector so that we can speak to this motion more truthfully, so that every year when October comes around, we can honestly say we're proud of what the province has done for manufacturers and exporters.

We see manufacturers leave this province under this government. We saw job losses at Hayes Dana, Edscha, Dana Brake, John Deere—all places where the government did nothing while manufacturing left.

Mr. Speaker, when the manufacturers take their business elsewhere, they're leaving workers out to dry. Look at Vertis in my own riding. The company went under and refused to pay the employees the severance pay they were owed. Some people had 35 years of seniority and received nothing, yet the company is still selling that product right here in Ontario.

Employees of Energex in Welland are just as nervous. Right now Energex is sitting in bankruptcy protection. Our Welland constituency office is hearing it daily.

Workers covered by US Steel are worried about their pensions. They put their lifetime of work in the manufacturing sector and now they're turning to the government to protect what they've earned.

These are just a few stories from struggling manufacturers right across the province. Places like Welland, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Thorold need the government to properly support our manufacturing and exporting sector. People from Niagara don't want to hear about supporting our manufacturers in the same week they're hearing about layoffs and closures. But the government has the power to stop this, and that's key.

I ask my fellow MPPs: Have you been at a plant on the day it closed? I'm asking anybody here. Well, I've been there, to see them scared, crying, worried about their future, not knowing if they're going to be able to continue providing for their families. Imagine having to go home and telling your children that, through no fault of your own, their dad or their mom has lost their job.

Two things have caused the manufacturing jobs to flee this province: the high price of the dollar, the petro dollar that we've had for a number of years, and the price of hydro.

I was there. I watched the effects of both of these. With the price of the dollar falling back to the mid-80s, where a number of economists said it would be by the end of the year, the government can act today to make Ontario a better place for manufacturing. A motion like this won't do anything for workers who are facing job loss. Lowering hydro rates for manufacturers, supporting exporters and protecting pensions can help the manufacturers in this province.

In the auto industry, we have found that for every job created directly in a car manufacturing plant, there are

eight other spin-off jobs created. When we create 1,000 jobs, we're actually giving the province 8,000. From those 1,000 jobs in Windsor, you would have gotten 8,000 jobs. Imagine what that would have done to the high unemployment in Windsor. When we miss out on 1,000 jobs, we lose 8,000.

Let's come up with an Ontario-wide auto policy, and let's lower our hydro rates. That will actually help manufacturers.

But I also believe the members across from me need to step up and support our workers. Windsor is a great example—that money that won't go back into our province and the jobs that won't go to people who desperately need them. That's exactly the same story we saw over the last 10 years: 3,000 jobs were lost in St. Thomas—we're talking about the auto sector—2,000 were lost in my home local in St. Catharines and 3,000 in Oshawa.

Every other country in the world is supporting manufacturing because they know how important it is to the overall health of their economy and putting good-paying jobs—it doesn't matter where it is. It could be in the United States, it could be in Brazil, it could be in Sweden, it could be in Finland—they're all doing it. I'm encouraging this government to do the same thing.

Our children and grandchildren need that to happen. We can pass a motion like this and be done with it or we can fight to protect our manufacturers, our exporters and the workers who depend on the sector right here in Ontario for the betterment of our kids and our grandkids.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** It's my pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of the member from York Centre's motion recognizing the month of October as Manufacturing Month. As we're all aware across the House, manufacturing in Ontario is a key economic driver. As a matter of fact, on July 8 of this year, TD was quoted: "Looking out over the next 12-18 months, we expect reasonably broad-based gains in manufacturing output."

BMO, as of May 2014, also said: "The stronger US economy/weaker loonie combination is a clear positive one-two punch for Ontario exports and manufacturing." I would agree with the member from York Centre who read the following quote as well: "If you talk to the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters they will tell you that one of their biggest concerns is one of those that whoever talks down the growth in the manufacturing sector since the global recession doesn't do us any favours"—that's my quote.

Our province's manufacturing sector is gaining, and it's gaining strength since the global recession. It has been supported by our regional economic development funds, which have contributed over 90% of the investments to the manufacturing sector.

The Ontario manufacturers and exporters report that exports totalled \$13.6 billion in August of this year, a 5% higher value than in August 2013.

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It has been a long time since a member from Cambridge highlighted the robust advanced manufacturing companies that we have in Cambridge. My riding of Cambridge is built on a foundation of manufacturing. Indeed, our industrial heritage harkens back to the mills that were built around the Grand and Speed Rivers that founded our city.

Cambridge has long been established as a manufacturing hub in Ontario, currently numbered at 495 manufacturing businesses. These range in diversity from textile manufacturing to leading-edge science and technology firms.

Advanced manufacturing companies are growing in Cambridge and are taking advantage of our highly skilled workforce that is supported by many programs from Conestoga College, and that contributes to our highly skilled workforce.

Companies such as Toyota came to Cambridge not only for the lifestyle benefits of living in that area but also because of the skills available. They currently have 8,000 employees in Cambridge. As a matter of fact, on September 30, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada manufactured its six-millionth vehicle. This Toyota plant has won numerous awards, most recently, this year, winning the J. D. Power and Associates Platinum Plant Quality Award, which recognizes that the Cambridge facility was founded to produce vehicles with fewer defects or malfunctions than any other plant.

They also thanked the Ontario government recently during a meeting with myself and the Premier for Ontario's partnering with the auto sector during the economic downturn to ensure that auto manufacturing in Ontario would remain robust and growing.

One of the other manufacturing plants we have in Cambridge is Tenneco Cambridge. This plant, which currently employs around 470 people, makes exhaust systems for Toyota and General Motors vehicles. They recently had Southwestern Ontario Development Fund help to expand their business and hire more employees.

COM DEV International Ltd. is perhaps one of the best-known space industry manufacturers in Ontario. It's a global designer and manufacturer of space hardware for use in communications, space science, remote sensing and defence applications. Their new project will improve their plating and high-powered testing facilities and significantly enhance their productivity. To support it, they received a \$1-million grant from the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund to expand manufacturing facilities and hire more employees in Cambridge.

Centra Industries is also based in Cambridge, and it conducts research and development and manufactures aircraft components for major manufacturers such as Boeing and Bombardier. Centra, COM DEV and hundreds of other aerospace companies across Ontario have made this province an actual world leader in aerospace development. Centra employs 400 highly skilled people.

One of our other best-known and perhaps one of the oldest employers in our town is Babcock and Wilcox.

They employ over 700 nationwide, of whom 680 are employed in Cambridge. They engineer and manufacture thermal boilers and nuclear steam boilers.

I want to highlight all these companies—and that's just a fraction of what happens here in Cambridge. I really believe that supporting the motion to declare October as Manufacturing Month will serve to highlight the important manufacturing businesses that have made Ontario their home and their contributions to our Ontario economy and families. I think the highlighting of our manufacturing sector is going to be key in ensuring we have a robust manufacturing economy in the future.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I will be supporting this motion this afternoon, but I believe we also have a responsibility to talk about the challenges facing manufacturing in Ontario.

Manufacturing is the backbone of this province's economy, and it's very important in my riding as well, manufacturing plants like KTH, Clorox, Husky, Mars, Blue Mountain Plastics and many more. But throughout Ontario's history, the manufacturing industry has played an absolutely integral part in the livelihood and productivity of this province's economy.

But now that we've become a have-not province, our manufacturing sector is being challenged. The policies of this government have decimated manufacturing jobs in Ontario. Over the last decade, the province has lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. It must be pointed out that skyrocketing energy rates—which are the highest in North America—and red tape are some of the primary reasons that have forced many manufacturers to close or leave this province altogether.

One company wrote to me recently and notified me that their hydro bill for the month of April was \$37,802.41. The company's response to this: "The Liberal government's mismanagement of energy in this province is criminal."

Ontario's energy rates have tripled under this government's watch. No wonder companies are leaving Ontario when they realize that everywhere around us, they would have cheaper energy rates. Companies like Kellogg's, Heinz and Caterpillar—all of these companies still exist and manufacture, just no longer in Ontario.

This government needs to take a serious look at the problem and take proactive action in fixing our province's manufacturing sector.

While I agree with the motion to officially recognize and celebrate Ontario's manufacturing sector, we must also address the problems manufacturers face in Ontario today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you to the member opposite for the opportunity to speak to this motion to recognize October as Manufacturing Month.

We know how hard Ontario has been hit when it comes to manufacturing jobs. In Oshawa, we know it



personally. Province-wide, more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the past 10 years. Ontario has gone from having 1.1 million manufacturing jobs to only 800,000. That means that 35% of all manufacturing jobs in Ontario have disappeared over this past decade.

As New Democrats, we know that manufacturing jobs tend to be good jobs. They tend to be jobs with pensions, with benefits and with strong, fair wages. Strong wages mean that people can afford to live and build a life in their community. With secure manufacturing jobs, families can buy homes. With quality manufacturing jobs, people can plan for their future in the short term and in their retirement. As New Democrats, we care about Ontarians' ability to retire with dignity and with financial security. We want people to make enough money in reliable jobs, like manufacturing jobs, so they can set goals, make plans, afford to live and afford to retire.

In short, we need to make significant changes. Currently, there are no comprehensive policies requiring the province or our municipalities to purchase Ontario-made goods and products. We shouldn't just be telling Ontarians to buy local; we should be actively providing incentives and leading the charge ourselves.

We also have to create a climate for investment and innovation in Ontario. Investment in machinery and equipment is at the lowest point in 35 years. This is unacceptable. Companies should be encouraged to invest in buildings, machinery and equipment. If they decide to invest and build in Ontario, they will stay in Ontario. We need a real and competitive manufacturing strategy to attract and retain investment in our communities and strengthen the manufacturing industry in this province.

This is a topic that is extremely significant to my riding. Oshawa is strong, and Oshawa is growing. Many people across the province are at least a little familiar with Oshawa's rich and proud automotive history. In terms of our automotive heritage, our history is well established. But our present and future are still unfolding. The future of industry and manufacturing is on display at GM in Oshawa. Our locally made GM products are top-of-the-line and cutting-edge.

I know this personally. I'd been planning for a while to buy local, and I am now the proud owner of a 2014 Impala, and it is unbelievable, and it is beautiful. I brought it up in my inaugural speech, and I've been looking for an excuse to bring it up again. If you don't believe me, come and find me, and I will show you. If you'd like, come on out to Oshawa, and I'll take you on a tour of the plant where it was made.

The point is, it is modern, it is competitive, it is innovative and it is manufactured locally—manufactured by my neighbours and people I know in my community. They don't just make great cars, by the way; they work in a high-tech cutting-edge facility.

We are also fortunate to have the GM Automotive Centre of Excellence at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, which showcases a unique wind tunnel among other top-of-the-line testing facilities. The ACE is a tremendous centre for learning and innovation.

Industries across the country can utilize their extreme testing capabilities to further their own product knowledge and advance development.

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We have remarkable support for innovation locally and provincially, but we need to have remarkable support to create, build, assemble and manufacture. We have to prioritize, not just recognize, manufacturing. Paying lip service to the importance of manufacturing is not acceptable. We should celebrate solid manufacturing job creation every day.

Speaker, we challenge the government to create a climate for that growth and to make it a priority, not just a token topic for a month.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Ottawa—Orléans.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Merci, Monsieur le Président. I am proud to stand in the House today and support my colleague from York Centre's motion to celebrate Ontario's manufacturing and export sector, as it contributes significantly to the prosperity of this province. Ontario's manufacturing and export sector has been a considerable backbone to this province, and these sectors contribute over \$95 billion to Ontario's gross domestic product. Many people in this province proudly work in these industries, and this government is working hard to ensure that these sectors continue to grow, given the challenging economic time we live in.

Il est aussi important de noter la diversité de ce secteur. La manufacture en Ontario a plusieurs sous-secteurs.

These subsectors include automotive, aerospace, defence, agriculture equipment manufacturing, food processing, clean technologies and others.

In my riding of Ottawa—Orléans, we may not have an auto plant, a GM or some of my colleague from Cambridge's—but we are the home of a milk processing plant called Natrel. This business employs hundreds of people locally and thousands nationwide, and provides much of Ontario with dairy products, including milk and cheese.

Natrel's sole dairy processing plant in Ontario is in Orléans, while Agropur, the sister division of Natrel, has an additional two dairy processing plants in Ontario.

I also have the pleasure of representing ProSoya Inc., which processes soy products, and Yeliv Inc., which specializes in designing and creating the equipment used in the processing of soya products.

Ces deux entreprises emploient plus de sept personnes et continuent de grandir, while their products are used by major companies, such as DuPont, Unilever, Kraft and many more.

I know many of you represent numerous other manufacturers in this province. These businesses are part of the backbone of Ontario's prosperity, as well as employing hundreds of thousands of Ontarians in each of our communities.

Ontario is continuing to look forward and to help manufacturing continue to compete and expand around

the globe. To show the importance that we have placed in our manufacturing sector, our 2014 budget—a budget that the opposition did not support—introduced the 10-year, \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund. This fund will help the diverse manufacturing business across Ontario win the international competition for new investments, which will help our businesses grow and compete around the globe.

Monsieur le Président, nos investissements dans ce secteur fonctionnent.

Our government's investments are working. While manufacturing in Ontario, like many other jurisdictions around the world, saw a downturn in growth following the global economic crisis in 2008, our coordination with and investments in these many manufacturing businesses are allowing Ontario's companies to expand. According to the RBC economics Provincial Outlook, September 2014, "the ... export turnaround [has] gained traction." The report also stated that "we continue to expect that rapidly improving US demand will sustain further acceleration next year," and RBC continues to maintain their "solid 2.8% forecast for 2015."

It is undeniable that our government's investments have helped Ontario's manufacturing businesses retain, grow and compete worldwide. In fact, as mentioned by my colleagues, if you speak with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, they will tell you that one of their biggest concerns is those who talk down the growth in the manufacturing sector since the global recession.

Our manufacturing sector is recovering and growing, and this government will continue to invest and work with our diverse manufacturers in order that we continue to ensure that our sector will grow jobs here and expand exports around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, we also created the regional economic development funds, and they have contributed over 90% of their investments to the manufacturing sector. Not only that, they helped create jobs.

One of the key highlights is a company that I would like to mention in this House. It's called Animat. This company recycles used tires and creates animal bedding. It is located in Moose Creek in eastern Ontario, near my riding of Ottawa-Orléans. The Eastern Ontario Development Fund provided Animat with \$600,000, which has helped create 10 more jobs and increased their recycling capacity to meet the demand for their product around North America.

This is why I'm very proud to be standing in this House in support of the motion by my colleague from York Centre.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** October is already recognized as National Manufacturing Month. Of course, it will be fantastic if our province followed suit.

It has already been pointed out that over the past decade, high taxes, skyrocketing energy rates and copious amounts of red tape, of course, have forced many manufacturers to close their doors or leave our province

altogether. As was also pointed out, Ford just this week announced that, instead of locating in Ontario, it was locating its manufacturing in Mexico, which leaves a sort of bad taste in a lot of people's mouths. To consider celebrating now is kind of difficult. Just last Friday they announced this.

I think it's hard to feel that we're really on the road to recovery, which we need to get to. We used to be the driving force of this country's economy, and we're nowhere near that.

Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate what the manufacturing sector and all of its employees have done for our province. I'm happy to support this motion to recognize all the work that the industry is doing and will do. I also think that the manufacturing industry and all of its employees and their families, obviously, deserve better.

Just this morning, I was at a committee meeting. The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters spoke about their concerns about new legislation. Basically, it was Bill 18, which is supposed to create stronger workplaces for a stronger Ontario. I'm worried that this is lip service and sentimental statements, much as having celebrations and special months. As was pointed out, we need more than just one month of celebration on a topic. I believe it was the member from Oshawa who said it: We need the whole year to focus on our manufacturing, not just one month a year.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters this morning spoke about their concerns with Bill 18: decreased flexibility, increased Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums, increased insurance premiums, increasing expensive audits, increasing red tape and increasing bureaucracy. That would decrease productivity and actually hurt manufacturing.

I think that we all need to do better. The manufacturers want a friendly environment in Ontario. The employees and their families deserve a government that makes their industry's job creation and payroll a priority. They deserve a government that does more than just pay lip service and say "Thank you" for all the work they do. They deserve better than what they are getting, and I hope that this is just the first step to begin to rectify the government's shameful record on this industry. The manufacturing sector and the people of Ontario deserve better, and we can do better.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak for a few minutes on this motion. Of course, I'm going to support manufacturing in Ontario and support this motion that October should be recognized as Manufacturing Month. But I think, as has been stated, Ontario could do a lot more to support manufacturing in the province. There have been a lot of challenges that have been put forward by policies of the Liberal government; in particular, I would mention high energy costs.

I look to my own riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, where we have Kimberly-Clark in Huntsville, a tissue



manufacturer. I've met with them, and when you talk with them, they'll point out that of the many tissue mills in North America, Huntsville being the only one in Ontario—it has the highest energy costs of any of their tissue plants in North America. That makes it very difficult for them to expand and continue when they're competing for capital within the company. That's something that needs to change if we want to have more manufacturing in the province of Ontario.

I was talking just recently with a Muskoka business trying to expand into Barrie, and they highlighted just how the regulations and red tape in Ontario are crippling business, including manufacturing businesses. This particular business, trying to expand into Barrie, into an industrial park, has been at it for three years now and still isn't able to get the site going there. This has to change if we want to be welcoming and promoting business in Ontario. I think there are some concrete things we could be doing.

We have many manufacturers in Parry Sound—Muskoka, including Connor Industries, which builds Stanley Boats in Parry Sound, which are being sold around the world—fine-quality aluminum boats, unique designs. I met with Bill Connor just a couple of weeks ago. His biggest challenge? Trying to get enough skilled people, in particular welders and metal workers, to be able to produce as much as he would like to. Frankly, that's limiting the amount of business they can do. So these are concrete things that can be done to improve manufacturing and improve our competitiveness in this province.

I'm happy to support the motion. It's nice to say how important manufacturing is, but we really need to do much more: address these high energy costs, address the onerous regulations and red tape, and develop more skilled workers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now recognize the member for York Centre. You have two minutes for reply.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I want to thank those who participated in the debate: the member from Ottawa—Orléans, the member from Cambridge, the member from York—Simcoe, the member from Niagara Falls, the member from Dufferin—Caledon, the member from Thornhill and the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka.

I've been listening with interest, because over the years I've had five different portfolios, and one of them was industry, trade and technology. I can tell you that when we were attracting the auto sector—the one at Honda, the one at Toyota—they continually told me that they send their completed product back to Japan and the number one product in the world is produced in Ontario.

When we opened a van plant in Windsor, Lee Iacocca was there, and in his speech he said that the reason they have their plant here in Ontario is because of the labour force. The big factor is health care, where the fringe benefits in the United States cost more than the metal that goes into the car.

One of things we have to be aware of is that there are always factors out there—and on the Ford plant moving

to Mexico, you haven't heard the real background story of that. This is something where a decision was made; they're a global company and they have to play in a global market. But they have put a lot of money into Oakville, they've put a lot of money into a lot of their other facilities, and this is just part of the game. But I don't think that anybody can really deny that Ontario is a base for manufacturing and exporting. We have to support it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will take the vote on that item at the end of private members' public business.

## PROTECTING CHILD PERFORMERS ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS ARTISTES

Mr. Paul Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry / Projet de loi 17, Loi visant à protéger les enfants artistes dans l'industrie du spectacle vivant et l'industrie du spectacle enregistré.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to the standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, it is again a tremendous pleasure to welcome to the Legislature of Ontario some of Ontario's finest performers in the recorded and live entertainment industries. We've had such a good working relationship with those who are on the front lines of this issue, and I want to thank the members and staff of ACTRA and Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

Here this afternoon from ACTRA and Equity are Art Hindle, David Sparrow, Sue Milling, Lisa Blanchette, Karen Woolridge, Barb Larose, Karl Pruner, Luca De Franco, Clara Pasieka, Lynn McQueen, Jeremy Civiero, Arden Ryshpan, David Gale, David Macniven, Ferne Downey, John Nelles, Kim Hume and Catherine Disher. Welcome.

These people, along with many others, have worked endless hours to ensure the best child performer protection in Canada. I thank them for all their hard work, for their support and for their sincere caring for these vulnerable child workers. They were, along with many of us in the Legislature, led to believe that this bill would be law by now and that we'd all be working on the associated regulations in the past year.

I also want to thank our legislative counsel, Pauline Rosenbaum, and her staff for their hard work and advice on Bill 17.

Speaker, here we are again, trying to make law the basic protections that all child performers should simply be able to expect in our province. Again, I will say many of the same things I said a year ago and hope that not only the new MPPs understand the importance of this

bill, but that the long-time MPPs will listen again and use all of their strength to persuade their leaders and House leaders to move this bill forward to committee agenda, third reading and royal assent as soon as possible.

Although we had hoped last year that it would be that one, there is still time to make this for Christmas, when Bill 17 will enshrine protection for child performers by becoming law.

Our live and recorded entertainment industries highlight the tremendous homegrown talent that we have from many areas in this province. Our entertainment industry is a significant economic force. I'll read a quotation from the Ontario Media Development Corp. March 1 news release:

"Film and television activity contributed \$1.28 billion to the provincial economy in 2012 and accounted for almost 29,000 full-time direct and indirect jobs. Since 2008, economic activity has increased by 90% and the 2012 financial results are the strongest ever."

In its March background to the OMDC release, it was reported that the domestic production dollars left in Ontario in 2010 were \$646.2 million, which increased to \$871.9 million in 2012. Additionally, foreign production dollars left in Ontario in 2010 were \$318.2 million, up to \$404.5 million in 2012. These numbers alone tell us the significance of the film and television production industry in Ontario.

The calibre of the writing, the performances and the productions are obviously top-notch, but in Ontario we have failed to enshrine clear and direct obligations to the child performers. We still don't have legislated hours of work, set breaks, play or resting areas, requirements for appropriate tutoring, for healthy snacks or for who can chaperone, tutor or act as a guardian.

Some time ago, the Ministry of Labour, ACTRA, Equity and the producers worked diligently on a series of very strong guidelines to address these concerns. But guidelines are just that, Speaker. They don't have to be followed. They look nice for a parent to read and feel safe about their child performer, but are only a preferred way of treating child performers. There will be those who will put the guidelines on the shelf, likely in outer offices so that the visitors can see them, but we all know that these folks have absolutely no intention of implementing these child safety measures if it is up to them. ACTRA and Equity have child safety as a standard ask in their contract negotiations, and have included as many safeguards as they possibly can.

But we all know that child performer safety should never be the subject of negotiations. It should be enshrined in law. The guidelines, contracts and input during the standing committee process in 2013 informed the writing of Bill 71 and now Bill 17. The writing process has recognized the obligations to child performers are different in the recorded and live entertainment industries and, as with Bill 71 and Bill 17, sets out requirements separately for each of these performance areas.

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Bill 17 has included the hours of discussion, amendment and negotiation that went through with Bill 71,

especially the amendments passing in committee on Wednesday, December 11, 2013.

Bill 17 will ensure that child performers will have the best and safest work experience while providing the entertainment industry with child performances necessary to tell the whole story. In June 2013, at a press conference for Bill 71, a fact sheet was handed out that provided information essential to this issue.

We have new MPPs in this Legislature. So to be sure that every member of the Legislature is able to know the essential information, I'll read it into the record now:

"Why do we need more than the Ontario Child Performers Guideline?"

"The Child Performers Guideline was developed by the Ministry of Labour in consultation with industry stakeholders.

"Some of these guidelines are supported by the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but others, like part 3 of the guideline, are presented as 'best practices' and carry little or no legal force.

"Furthermore, the guideline is silent on many aspects of the engagement of child performers.

"The Child Performers Guideline offers a solid foundation, but must be enshrined in legislation so that the full weight of the law may be brought to bear when necessary.

"For example, limited hours of work for minors are only 'strongly encouraged to be incorporated into workplace practices.'

"The same is true for the appointment of a chaperone, the provision of breaks in the workday, and travel to and from the workplace, among other provisions.

"Other aspects of the engagement of child performers that are not addressed in the guidelines include:

"—provision of tutoring;

"—regulation of exposure to moral hazards; and

"—protection of earnings through a requirement to put a portion of earnings in trust.

"ACTRA and Equity have negotiated strong collective-agreement language to address" some of "these issues. While we are proud of the work they have done, it is unconscionable that the welfare of children should be subject to market forces and the uncertainty of negotiated contracts.

"Some producers and engagers do not adhere to ACTRA or Equity contracts and, as a result, many child performers do not even have the protection of a collective agreement."

I've had about two dozen emails from parents of twins and triplets and three or more of children who are performers. They have been frightened that they can't afford to have guardians or chaperones for each child and therefore their children will not be able to perform.

I understand their concern but want to make it very clear that additional guardians or chaperones are the responsibility of the producer. This is a cost of doing business, similar to many other costs incurred during a production. It should be a line item in a production's



budget. It should be a basic to any production that protection for children is paramount.

The requirement for multiple children from one family to be in a production is likely quite low overall, and therefore the cost is also quite low. Really, how much is it to ensure the safety of children who are working?

I'll repeat my information about the child performer protection in other Canadian jurisdictions. In British Columbia, minimum standards for wages and working conditions for children working in the live and recorded entertainment industry are set under the Employment Standards Act and the employment standards regulations. The legislation covers minimum age, daily hours, split shifts, breaks, time before a recording device, hours free from work, work week, chaperones and income protection.

In Manitoba, the Worker Recruitment and Protection Act improves protections for children in the talent and modelling industry by making the agency and the parents/guardians of child performers jointly responsible for the safety and well-being of that child. It helps parents and guardians and agencies to recognize and to prevent the potential for exploitation before it happens.

A child under the age of 17 who will be promoted by a talent agency must have a child performer's permit from employment standards. The offence of operating without a licence or contravening the legislation is subject to fines from \$25,000 to \$50,000. I expect that fines of that amount would be significantly higher than the cost of ensuring what it would be to have a guardian or chaperone for each child on the set.

Again, for new MPPs, I'd like to provide a history of income protection for child performers. Some of these examples are from the States but provide the background that is applicable to this situation: Coogan accounts, aka blocked trust accounts, and trust accounts are required in the United States only in California, New York, Louisiana and New Mexico. Fifteen percent, which is not much, of the minor's gross wages are required to be withheld by the employer and deposited into the Coogan account within 15 days of employment.

The Coogan Law is named after the famous child actor Jackie Coogan. Coogan was discovered in 1919 by Charlie Chaplin and soon after cast in the comedian's famous film *The Kid*. Jackie-mania was in full force during the 1920s, spawning a wave of merchandise dedicated to his image. It wasn't until his 21st birthday, after the death of his father and the dwindling of his career, that Coogan realized he was left with none of the earnings he had worked so hard for as a child. Under California law at the time, the earnings of the minor belonged solely to the parent.

Coogan eventually sued his mother and former manager for his earnings. As a result, in 1939, the Coogan Law was put into effect to protect future actors from finding themselves in the same terrible situation that Jackie was left in.

Jackie Coogan went on to recover a small portion of his earnings after battling his mother in court. He became

well known for playing Uncle Fester on the television series *The Addams Family* and has always been remembered for the role his story played in protecting child actors from losing their earnings.

Even long after the Coogan Law went into effect, another child performer who grew up with no savings from years of child performances was Shirley Temple.

These are extreme examples, but we want to be sure that child performers in Ontario are not the next bad example of how to treat the monies they work so hard for.

The requirements for income protection are absolutely necessary to ensure that our child performers are properly compensated. How much should be protected and the amount arrived at need further study and resolution, and how that money is handled to ensure that when the child performer reaches the age of 18 their earnings are managed properly.

I would also suggest that a trust be made available to child performers older than age 18, even perhaps to 21. At 18, there might be a tendency to spend their hard-earned money on current interests rather than on what would be good for them in the future. I can remember myself at age 18, and I don't think I would have made all the right choices if money had suddenly become available to me.

Child performers not only spend their days learning their lines and performing them; they must also attend tutoring sessions to learn their school work and meet the education curriculum required at their grade level. Their days can be very full, with diverse demands on their learning abilities, their mental and physical capacities, and the loss of time with their friends and family.

One of the appealing things about this bill for the producers is that it's a very low-cost initiative. No matter how big or small the company, any changes of these working conditions are very, very doable. Ensuring that there is a safe, secure room for child performers to be tutored, to relax and to learn their lines would be an easy requirement when selecting a production venue.

I'm running out of time. I have more, but Speaker, I can tell you that this is a very doable bill, and all parties, I'm sure, would be onboard to protect the children of this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to commend my friend from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek for his persistent and unrelenting commitment to this issue. It's quite remarkable and worthy of respect in this House.

I also want to recognize that my favourite mayor is in the gallery: the best mayor Paradise Falls ever had, my friend Art Hindle. I was a mayor once; I never had that kind of fun—until I came to Toronto, and then I realized that mayors can do all kinds of things you can't do where I come from. Anyway, that's probably a conversation for another day.

This is a really important piece of legislation. I've said many times in this House that my favourite hours—and

every passing year I'm here, I find that to be even more true—are during private members' public business. I think we as MPPs should find some way to strengthen this process, because I think most of us come here—regardless of our party, we bring life experiences.

My friend is a trade unionist, a background that I share with him, and he is someone—he made those remarks earlier today—who understands how important safety in the workplace is, and brings that sense of commitment and his experience there to try to inform this House on those who are most vulnerable. He has picked an important group of people in the workforce: children who are extremely vulnerable to exploitation. I think that shows us at our best as MPPs.

I think that much will be said today about why this is such an important piece of legislation and why it needs to get support. I don't know anyone on this side who, in conversations that I've had, isn't supportive of this legislation. My friend Minister Flynn, the Minister of Labour, spoke quite eloquently earlier, and has on other occasions, and I know that he has been working with the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

1550

I think there's a need for this bill to go to committee—I don't think for protracted debate. I think there's a strong consensus around it.

I understand that there are three things that need to be done, and, Mr. Speaker if you'd allow me, I'd like to put them on the record as what I understand as the pathway forward and that we're actually talking about how we get this bill, eventually, to third reading.

One is that this is consequential to other bills. There are other bills that will need to be amended to support this piece of legislation. I would implore the—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I can continue? A changing of the guard there. I'm okay?

So I'm hoping that, in anticipation of that, the House leaders from the three parties are working to try and start to message that we would like to see this happen. I'm hoping that the work is being done to sort through those legislative amendments and the consequential amendments that would have to be attached to this bill or the other pieces of bills that need to be legislated.

There are two areas that I think, for technical and legal reasons, if I understand them, need some clarification.

One is the addressing of mental or emotional distress. There are certain legal definitions that have to be in the bill to ensure that those components work.

The other one is travelling with chaperones. There are some issues, and I'm told these are not substantive but are more technical issues.

So here we have a private member's bill that I think right now—certainly at committee, I know we on this side and the members of the New Democratic Party both supported it; I understand our friends in the official opposition did not. I'm hoping that maybe as a result of this debate they will be prepared, when this goes to committee, to maybe revise their views on this. But I

think this is an important piece of legislation, and I think that if we can concentrate our members on those issues and on getting this through—private members' bills: Mr. Speaker, you yourself have one that's embodied right now in a bill before this House on distracted driving. I don't think we would have had this bill if it hadn't been for that. The member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, also in that bill, has a piece of legislation now attached to a government bill that will see fewer tow truck drivers killed. Sorry; that's the member for Simcoe. We'll see fewer cyclists killed because of street widening. The member for Parkdale—High Park has a piece of that bill herself in the one-metre rule. These are all good, practical things that members in this House have seen as important.

I'm hoping that by the time I leave this place, one of the things we'll see is that these kinds of bills will find themselves at third reading more frequently and more easily. And as this is one of the first rounds of private members' bills that we have actually started to do, one of my observations is that this place is too crazy partisan too much of the time. I think once the election is over and we've settled in here, people expect to see the best of us. They want to see us, wherever we can, set aside our differences, join in, and find common ground and move those things forward.

I can't think of one reason why this bill should not be moving through this Legislature very quickly. So I'm hoping that members will implore their House leaders and that those of us who have been around here as long as I have, and many longer, will use their influence with their colleagues to ensure that these things happen. I think we sometimes get into transactional politics, and that's part of it. We all have big pieces of legislation, we have things that we want to do, that our particular political affiliations and parties want to see happen consistent with our values, and there's a certain amount of reasonableness in expecting a certain amount of transactional politics. But as I think the member said earlier, there are certain things that should exist above politics, and this is certainly one of the things that should be either above politics or at the very core of all of our politics.

I will sum up and leave it at that and thank my friend opposite for his leadership and his consistent, principled position on this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Thornhill.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to speak on Bill 17, the Protecting Child Performers Act. Of course, we want to protect children in all aspects of their lives, whether they are working or in school or playing. Wherever they are, they have to be protected. That's why we're here, I believe: to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

It's interesting that the member opposite who presented this motion spoke about Jackie Coogan, and I guess I'm from a different generation maybe, because I was thinking more along the lines of Macaulay Culkin, who we all know lost what he had earned as a child actor. It



was not put away by his parents. We see too often that children are taken advantage of. I mean, they are children, and how would they know about financial things and investments. They would believe that the money was being saved for them if that's what they were being told.

I, myself, have a neighbour who participated in the movie *The Music Man* when it was taped right here in the greater Toronto area, and I believe Peterborough as well. I was very interested at the time in hearing about some of the rules that were involved—she did join ACTRA—in terms of how many hours during the day the child performers could be on the set. In fact, she wasn't supposed to be in a scene, and then she was put in a scene at the last minute. The actor that was supposed to be in that scene had used up the maximum number of hours, so they had to make that switch.

I just imagine how complicated it must be to work with child actors. We often hear the more seasoned adult actors say that the last thing they want to do is be in a movie or a TV show with a child because they tend to steal the show, but obviously, for the people producing it, there are serious challenges. I think that we need to do more to protect the kids, but we also have to realize that there are a lot of people who benefit from children working in the entertainment industry. There are the agents, there are the producers, there are the distributors, there are the advertisers and the sponsors, and they're putting a lot of pressure on the entire industry as a whole. Obviously, we have to do what we can to ensure that the children are safe.

Now, we also have to look at the monies that the children are earning, that it's put away for them and it's not all being gobbled up by all kinds of expenses such as agent fees and things like that, and I'm not sure that's being addressed here.

I think that we need to also concern ourselves with who is working with our children. We are hearing that the Toronto District School Board is asking for background checks for parents who are just volunteering to go on a field trip, they're not even going to be alone with any children, and so, as we're debating this motion, I'm wondering if there are background checks being done on people who are working with children in the entertainment industry, if there are any rules in place or if they're planning to put any rules in place to ensure that children aren't left alone with somebody who isn't a designated chaperone or parent or grandparent or something like that.

Obviously, if they have to travel and they have to stay overnight somewhere, that obviously concerns me as a parent. Maybe we have to broaden our scope to also include children who are involved in semi-professional sports at a very young age where there are team sponsors and travel and there's a lot of room for exploitation as well.

I think that we definitely have to have some legislation in place—I think that all members of the Legislature agree with that—but I think that too often the problem with new laws that we're contemplating is that we don't

always recognize the consequences of what we're doing. I wouldn't want to see anything hamper our ability to allow children to participate in the entertainment industry. I would want to see something that wasn't a lot of red tape and a lot of bureaucracy. I wouldn't want to see something that slows down production in any way. Children, if they are cast in a part when they are 12 years old, are not going to look the same or act the same when they are 13 years old. Time is of the essence, so it has to be done in such a way that it doesn't slow down the production. We have to be very cognizant of that.

I want to thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, who mentioned that children are exceptionally vulnerable to exploitation, and I think that's what we need to focus on: that kids can't be exploited for financial gain, they can't be exploited for the entertainment of adults somehow, and that the monies that they are earning are put away for their future. Perhaps there could be some kind of RESP investment up to a certain amount. We have to realize that these kids aren't necessarily the star in a big production. A lot of those kids are already members of ACTRA. I think that what we're addressing more are the kids who are doing small parts, maybe in a commercial, a small part in a production. In the greater Toronto area, we have such terrible traffic now that I'm concerned about the kids just travelling, how they're getting to places and how they're being picked up and that they're not being left alone to walk and to try to find transportation somehow.

So I think that these are all things we have to address. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing us to speak on this private member's bill today.

1600

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Imagine for a moment watching Anne of Green Gables or Annie with a cast full of adults, or perhaps a production of *Oliver Twist* where the six-foot-tall lead says in his deep, booming voice, "Please, Sir, can I have some more?" I'm sure many of our talented performers, some of whom are with us today, could miraculously pull this off, but let's be honest: If we want to portray real life in our scenes and on our stages, we must include children to play those parts.

In that respect, this is a workplace like no other. But because children do not take part in other workplaces, there has been a failure to properly recognize what it means to be a child in the workforce. These are exceptionally talented young performers. Some of them act from a very, very young age, and they do it with virtually no protection at all from the law. Yes, there are some guidelines, but they are just that: guidelines with no legal force. That is why Bill 17 is so important, and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak to it today.

I want to thank my colleague the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek for acting so quickly to bring this bill back before the Legislature and for being such a strong advocate on behalf of child performers. I also want to recognize the important work that has been

done on this file over the years by ACTRA Toronto and the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

The story goes that renowned Canadian actor Shirley Douglas was on the set of *Wind at My Back* many years ago. She noticed a room off to the side where the children she shared camera time with would go for their tutoring. The other thing that she noticed horrified her. Adult crew members would sometimes enter the same room, but when they did, they wore a mask. They wore a mask because it was used for storing paint and they needed protection from the fumes. Well, Shirley Douglas grew up in a home that very well understood and clearly knew the need to promote the rights of workers, the rights of children and the need for health and safety in the workplace. Never shy to speak her mind, she took it upon herself to do something about it.

Since then, ACTRA and Equity have worked to build into their contracts protection for their young members. They have developed a fine set of rules to make sure that producers never forget that although those child performers are workers, they are first and foremost children. Let me quote from the relevant section of ACTRA's Independent Production Agreement: "The parties recognize the special situation that arises when minors are engaged in the workplace. The parties are dedicated to ensuring a safe environment for all performers, with extra care given to the proper health, education, morals and safety of minors."

The rules flowing from that include strict limits on hours of work and rest periods depending on the age of the child. Responsible adult supervision of the children on set, guided by the child's parents, is required. Qualified psychologists must be hired to oversee the scenes that might be emotionally disturbing to a child. Provisions are included for tutoring on set to ensure child performers continue to receive the same education as their peers. There are rules in place to protect the money earned by a child performer, rules that require a certain percentage of earnings to be put directly into a trust account that the performer can access when they reach adulthood.

Speaker, that is how the game is played on a union set. ACTRA and Equity should be commended for the work that they have done on this, developing the rules and enforcing them. Yes, there are disturbing stories of violations, but at least there are rules and actions that can be taken when those rules are broken. But not all child performers are so lucky. There are many child performers working in this province without the benefit of a union contract. The type of rules I just described do not apply to them. They work in an industry where contracts are short, work is intermittent and hiring is often done in quite a subjective way. They are vulnerable to producers making unreasonable demands as they try to cut corners. Without the support of a union, they are left exposed to whatever may come their way. That, Speaker, is unconscionable.

Protection of child performers should be the law in Ontario. It shouldn't be left to the goodwill of producers,

and it shouldn't be left subject to negotiations that will happen every two or three years. We take great pleasure in watching the work of these talented performers. Our culture and our economy are enriched by the fruits of their labour. It is our job to put in place the laws that will protect the children who play a vital role in the entertainment industry. This is what this bill does, and I encourage all members of this House to support it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to thank the member opposite from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek again for bringing this legislation forward, the proposed Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

Mr. Speaker, I follow my colleague the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change in support of the proposed legislation. I also want to remind the members of the House and those who are watching this debate this afternoon that the Minister of Labour this morning was very forthcoming and very explicit in his support of the proposed legislation. I wanted to make sure those two comments get recorded.

I also want to pay tribute to the member for Parkdale—High Park. I believe in 2007 she introduced similar legislation, so I want to say thank you for her work to lead this conversation.

We all agree in this House that children are one of the most vulnerable populations in our community. It's our legislative effort collectively to ensure that they're protected at all times. The proposed legislation is clearly an important piece of legislation.

More importantly, it talks—and I want to applaud the member opposite—in the explanatory note, which is very self-explanatory, in terms of explicitly stating "child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry." It talks about the issue of promoting the best interests, protection and well-being of child performers. That's what legislation is about. Who are we trying to protect? What is the intent of the bill?

In my very short time, I want to provide some suggestive feedback to the member opposite, because I believe there is extensive clarity in the bill but there are certain pieces of the legislation where there can always be improvement, particularly when it comes to the hours of work. On page 8 of the proposed legislation, it talks about maximum number of hours of work in terms of four to 16 etc. I think when the bill goes through second reading to the committee, it is very important for us in the Legislature to make sure this maximum number of hours of work is based on best practices, better known as evidence-based.

The reason why I'm talking about this is because I have some personal experience about this particular bill. I don't think the member opposite knows that. My young nephew Neil, now 24, was a young actor. As his aunt, I got stuck with supervising and chaperoning him, so-



called, for his performance. I got stuck there for eight hours and I had no idea what I was supposed to do. I was told that he's going to be at this hour, and that's it. I said, "Well, wait a minute here. He can't sit here for X amount of time." When we talk about maximum hours of work, sometimes we may even have to help the employer—explicitly state in the legislation how many periods of breaks and rest. If you have a young child performer who's six years or two years old, unless the law explicitly says that, the employer may not do that. I like the fact that it's spelled out in terms of hours of work.

The other piece is that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change also talked about enforcement. I totally agree. As a former nurse, I believe that we need to make sure that we have strengthened the law, protection—and also explicit fines. Sometimes people don't do anything unless you spell out the fine. How much will the consequences be?

1610

I know the member opposite talked about healthy food in the proposed legislation. I want to make sure that that healthy food reflects the provincial guidelines we have right now in the Ministry of Education. Also, respectfully, we need to add the word "diversity," because you may have healthy food but not respect the culture of the community, especially of young performers.

Mr. Speaker, I know this member and many of my colleagues here on the government side are very supportive of the proposed legislation. I do agree with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change: We need to make sure private members' bills like this should not be debated to death, and make sure we move this particular legislation forward, go to committee and have a proper conversation and bring in witnesses if there is any amendment to the bill.

I do want to conclude my remarks by thanking the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. Thank you for your tenacity. Thank you for your perseverance on this particular bill to ensure that every child who is a child performer will be protected in this province. We all believe every child needs to be protected, whether they are in a classroom or in a workplace.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to thank folks for the opportunity today to speak to Bill 17, the Protecting Child Performers Act, 2014, a bill that certainly resonates with many who have watched as children in Ontario perform and grow on both stage and screen. I think of so many who have taken to the stage and grown to such heights with the support of Ontario's performing industry.

When it comes to young entertainers in this province, we have a rich history. Even in the last few decades we can think of so many success stories that got started right here in Ontario, and I'd like to list a few of those folks.

Ryan Gosling, from London, started when he was a young boy in *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* in 1995; Goosebumps; my staff's childhood favourite, *Breaker*

*High*; and of course my wife's favourite, *The Notebook*. I'm sure you've seen it. I even had a bit of a tear myself watching that. But my personal favourite is *The Ides of March*.

That brings me to his *The Notebook* co-star, Rachel McAdams from St. Thomas.

Drake, from Toronto, in *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, starred as Jimmy Brooks, and later moved on to a very successful music career.

Robbie Amell from Toronto: *Scooby-Doo!*, *Cheaper by the Dozen 2*, *Murdoch Mysteries* and *How I Met Your Mother* are some of the performances he was in.

Sarah Gadon from Toronto: *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* and now starring in the TV series *Being Erica*.

We've got Charlotte Sullivan: *Harriet the Spy*, *Goosebumps*, *Murdoch Mysteries* again and *Rookie Blue*.

Shenae Grimes-Beech, from Toronto: *Degrassi*, 90210—also one of my staff's favourites.

We've got Kevin Zegers, from Woodstock, known as a child star from the movie *Air Bud*, who has since moved on to a series of TV shows and movies.

Michael Cera was born in Brampton, starting his career in an unpaid commercial role for Tim Hortons kids' camp that led to a Pillsbury commercial in which he poked the Pillsbury Doughboy. You likely remember that, Speaker. Now we recognize him from movies like *Juno*, *Superbad*, and *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*.

And of course, we cannot forget Mike Myers, who started out on CBC's *King of Kensington* and is world-famous today. Speaker, the list goes on and on.

While I may be digressing somewhat here, many in this House may recall spending family time around the TV watching the CHCH-produced *Tiny Talent Time* out of Hamilton, the riding that the member who has tabled Bill 17 comes from. For almost four decades, Bill Lawrence hosted *Tiny Talent Time*, showcasing area children, who had the opportunity to display their talents on TV screens across southern Ontario. While there are no statistics to track, you can rest assured that there are many who got their start on the CHCH stage, to go on to enjoy great careers as performers around the world. Some good news just in, too: *Tiny Talent Time* made a triumphant return to CHCH last year, so stay tuned.

But back to the bill itself: As we've heard, child labour is of course illegal in Ontario, with one notable exception, that being the entertainment industry. That said, it is easily understandable why proponents look to enact regulation to protect our young people as they look to do what young people can do so well, and that is to entertain.

Bill 17 would introduce rules for dealing with child actors in both the live and the recorded entertainment industries. It calls for the mandatory creation of trust funds. This is something that has been around in the United States since the Jackie Coogan case in the late 1930s. Further, the bill addresses the need to ensure our child actors do not miss out on the educational opportunities that are the right of every child here in the province of Ontario. In addition to mandating tutoring for child

actors, the bill looks to ensure that our young performers are not being overworked or lacking adult guidance to prevent pitfalls that are, of course, likely to occur even with our adult performers. Regulations on working hours, the establishment of break periods and mandatory chaperoning—these are all measures that help enshrine respect for the child performer, both as a child and as a performer.

None of this takes away, of course, from the unforgiving job that most stage parents do. Bottom line: It is Ontario parents who must have our children's best interests at heart—to protect them, to ensure that they stay on the right path. I believe that is what parents in Ontario do their best to live up to. This legislation simply fills in that societal gap to help parents and their children reach these shared goals.

Speaker, it should be noted as well that the independent production agreement, IPA, of the Canadian Media Production Association and Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists is considered the gold standard in Canada when it comes to non-legislated protection of our child performers. It contains over a dozen pages relating directly to the protection of child performers in film and television. Currently, no other document or law serves to offer this level of protection to child performers. As such, we believe that if this bill does pass and make its way to committee, we should look to the IPA for direction on possible amendments to move this legislation forward.

I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 17 today. I know we had some very valid discussion last session. It did get to committee. With that, I will close by encouraging you all to check out the new Tiny Talent Time Saturdays at 8 p.m.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to rise on this bill. I feel like this should be a tabloid headline, but I was a child performer. Every Wednesday when I was in primary school, I went down to CBC and took part in a show that most of us are too young to remember called Time of Your Life.

I was an extra on that show. I was a dancer. When I think back to what we actually did, what they actually had us do—no slight to the CBC; big fan of the CBC. But I would dance and be in rehearsals for three to six hours. Think about it: an eight- or nine-year-old. There was no tutor. I just missed a day of school every week for a year. I loved every minute of it. It wasn't a problem. I never saw a penny from it. I had good parents. I'm sure if they had stuck 15% of it in the bank, it would be worth about \$5 today.

But still, looking back on what could have happened, one can say very clearly that that's not what children should be put through—very, very clearly.

I have to say, this is a long time coming. As I said to our friends from ACTRA and from Canadian Actors' Equity, back again. Back again to the Legislature. They have been back again because this is part of the status of

the artist legislation that Peter Tabuns from Toronto-Danforth brought in, and that was before 2007. We're going back to the very beginning of the Liberals being in power here at Queen's Park. Then it was part of the status legislation in 2007, as you heard the member from Scarborough—Agincourt say. Kudos to the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, who has brought it back twice since then. We are talking about a bill that has been before this Liberal government for 11 years almost, two majority governments and one minority government.

When I hear great support from across the aisle, as we've always heard when we've talked about this for those almost 11 years, I have to say, put it into action. Enough talk. Where's the walk? We all know that in a majority government, the opposition gets its say, and the government gets its way. We want you to have your way on this. You support it. We want you to pass it. You can do it in a heartbeat. As it goes to committee, you can bring it back quickly. You can pass it in third reading and you can make it law. It's entirely up to you. Let me repeat that: It is entirely up to the Liberal government to make this law.

**1620**

I have to say, I know it's going to pass on a voice vote, but certainly today—we miss him, we had Santa Claus up there for a while from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek—

**Interjection:** No. Hamilton Mountain.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Pardon me?

**Interjection:** Hamilton Mountain.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Hamilton Mountain, sorry.

So we had Santa Claus sitting behind ACTRA and Canadian Actors' Equity. I can think of no better Christmas present for the children of this province than to pass this legislation into law before Christmas. That's a great Christmas present for children. What is this bill actually asking for? It's really just asking for protection for child workers. These are workers.

You heard the member from the Progressive Conservative Party talking about the fact that child work is supposed to be illegal. Well, it's not in this instance, and with good reason, because children want to and enjoy working, as I did, in the entertainment industry. But surely, if we have child workers, we have to have child worker protection. Surely, if we have child workers, we have to have child worker protection.

Sometimes when we think, "Well, because it's the entertainment industry, they're not really workers." Yes, they are. I remember those rehearsals really well. I remember how tired I was at the end of the day of going over and over and over a dance step or two or three with a line or two, if I was really lucky that week, on a week in, week out show. I remember how exhausted I was at the end of the day. I remember that it was sometimes fun and I enjoyed it, but it was sometimes work because little kids—I had a stage mother. Most child actors do have a stage mother or father. She enjoyed it way more most of the time than I did—I have to say that—because, quite frankly, at eight or nine years old, you'd rather be



playing with your friends, you'd rather be at the playground at a certain point. You make friends on set and it's fun, but it's not always about you. It's not always about you.

Certainly, as we heard in the case of Jackie Coogan and Shirley Temple—huge child Hollywood stars—who came out of it, all of that child labour work, with nothing to show for it. That should be criminal. It should be criminal.

What we ask here today, and I'm going to repeat it: We ask it again, of a majority government—we've asked it of another majority government—for what they are completely capable of delivering, nothing more, nothing less. We ask them for something very simple and basic: to protect child labourers, child workers in the entertainment field. They say they support it. They've said they've supported it before. But nothing has changed for child workers in the entertainment industry in the province of Ontario in 11 years since they've been in government.

I know, my friends across the aisle, that this time it will be different. I know, because you're wonderful people elected by wonderful people, that you'll do the right thing. Many of you have children. Many of you have grandchildren. Many of you know children in the entertainment industry. I'm seeing smiles across the aisles, smiles across the aisles, so I know you're going to do the right thing this time. I know that it's not only going to go through committee, it's going to come back here for third reading and it's going to pass into law this time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now recognize the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. You have two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Well, Speaker, I was going to finish off with some more details, but I think we have to get into the meat of this situation. The bottom line here is, when I went through this last year and this went to committee, every party passed this through. It was the first time in the history of this Legislature that 64 amendments passed in less than an hour with no discussion—no discussion.

I might add, the bill was written and worked on by the minister of the time, who is now the House leader, and his staff, with my staff, with Equity and with ACTRA. We all assumed, and we had assurances, that it would go through at that time, but it got caught up, as I've said before, in the House leaders' situation, which was unfortunate.

But I'm a little surprised at the official opposition—that all of a sudden they have concerns—because their three members who sat on that committee, all three of them, were in total agreement at the time. They had no problems with it, and they also did not ask for any changes or amendments. They passed it fully. That went through. It sat on the order paper and was not brought forward.

That's where it died: on the order paper. It had already been through committee. They had already been lobbied

by the ones who may have had a problem with it—who, I might add, will not say it publicly. Nobody wants to come out against children, but there are people who are doing that behind the scenes; and they may have got to the official opposition to talk to them about it.

I don't know, but the bottom line is this: They knew about it. They knew about the amendments. They had an opportunity to change things that they were concerned about, and nothing happened. Everybody was happy. It was a big, happy family. I was actually stunned, surprised and overwhelmed by the co-operation. Little did I know that it was headed for more problems, out of my hands.

Once again I've brought it back, and I'm giving the people in this Legislature the opportunity to do the right thing for the children of Ontario: to protect child workers and entertainers. This is an opportunity for all of us to do the right thing. We talk about accountability. We talk about working with other people. Here's an opportunity to prove it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time for private members' public business has now expired.

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mrs. Martins.

Mrs. Martins has moved second reading of Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—Mrs. Martins?

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Referring to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** It has been requested that the—

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Let me correct that, sorry: social policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy—

**Interjections:** Social policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** — Social Policy. Agreed? The bill is so referred.

## MANUFACTURING MONTH

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Kwinter has moved private members' notice of motion number 8.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### PROTECTING CHILD PERFORMERS ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS ARTISTES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, has moved second reading of Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? So referred.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** When this item of business was last debated, we completed questions and comments on the shared speech of the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how excited I am to have this opportunity this afternoon

to speak for 20 minutes on Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

**1630**

This bill was first introduced in the Legislature on July 10 when we were sitting, of course, for what I call "our special summer sitting" after the provincial election. It stands in the name of the Minister of Education and of course has been called for second reading.

The bill is quite long. The title of the bill is quite long. In fact, it's 118 pages. From the outset, I want to congratulate and commend the critic for education from our party, the member for Simcoe North, for the good work that he has done on this issue and all of the education issues that he has addressed since being appointed the critic.

He has expressed a lot of concerns about this bill. I know he's consulting very widely. I want to indicate at the outset that I support his efforts to get this bill to committee and ensure that there are extensive public hearings when the Legislature has recessed for the winter.

I was privileged to serve in this Legislature going back to 1990 in my first term in office, between 1990 and 1995, in the days when Bob Rae was the Premier and the New Democrats were in power. I must say that there were extensive public hearings on a great many bills. I remember travelling the province, going to a lot of communities and listening to the presentations that were made by people in their communities. I think it was very helpful for us to hear the concerns, ideas and input from the general public. Of course, there was an onus upon the members and staff to make those hearings happen. It was a lot of work, certainly, but I think democracy was enhanced when people had that opportunity.

Of course, today we have modern methods of communication, and we have teleconferencing, and there are lots of opportunities. But I must say that I think, on average, legislation that has been passed by the Legislature in recent years has had far fewer hours of public hearing at the committee stage than was the case when I was first elected between 1990 and 1995. I would just submit to the government that Mr. Dunlop has put forward the suggestion that there should be extensive public hearings, that the committee should travel, and I would encourage them to give that serious consideration because we know that there are a lot of very serious concerns about this bill.

I just want to put the issue of child care in a bit of context. I want to thank and commend the legislative library and research services for putting together this research document for members, which I think we were given last week. It's very, very helpful in terms of putting some of these issues into context. Of course, our legislative library and research staff are non-partisan, impartial, and they do an outstanding job of researching the history of some of these issues, which helps us inform the discussion and the debate that we engage in today.



We know that since April 2010 the Ministry of Education has been responsible for what we now call the Early Years program, which includes the child care programs, and they're responsible for and involved with the funding, licensing and policy development of child care in the province of Ontario.

We know there are 47 local government entities, for example, consolidated municipal services managers, as well as district social services administration boards. These municipal entities are responsible for planning and managing child care services in their respective communities and administering fee subsidy programs to ensure that families who need the financial support of the provincial government and the taxpayers are in a position to receive that support.

It's interesting to point out that 2.6% of regulated spaces are operated by municipalities and regions. That's a very small percentage of the total but an important percentage of the total. Twenty-five per cent of child care is considered to be "for profit," but the vast majority of child care spaces are administered by non-profit agencies. I think the 25% of child care that's for profit is actually growing as a percentage of the whole. That says to me that obviously parents are looking for alternatives with respect to child care. It's a very significant and emotional decision that families have to make when they look for a child care provider for their children. So many families today are two-income families where both parents work, and when the children come along and when the maternity leaves must end, or the paternity leaves, whatever, there's a need for child care to be determined by families. Certainly we have confidence on this side of the House that parents are best suited and in the best position to make those decisions on behalf of their children. No one cares more about children than the parents, and we as a society have to recognize that, and the government needs to understand that too.

We have a system of regulation of child care already in the province, and have had for many years, under the Day Nurseries Act. That is the act that is the most important one in terms of the regulation of our child care system and programs. Of course, the Day Nurseries Act speaks to the health and safety of daycare centres and places, regulates staff levels and qualifications, ensures that children get a certain amount of outdoor time, and ensures proper nutrition for the children who are in child care. All of those are, I believe, things that all of us in this Legislature care about and support.

It's my understanding that 95% of regulated child care spaces are in one of the 5,050 licensed child care centres in the province of Ontario and that home-based child care, as we call it, means that children are in private residences outside of their homes. These are licensed by private home care agencies, and they contract with the individual caregivers so that there is some level of consistency and oversight. I think that's something that's in the public interest too. We have apparently, I'm told, 127 of these agencies in the province of Ontario today.

We also, within the provincial government, have something called the child care quality assurance and

licensing branch, and that branch is responsible for inspections and to ensure that minimum standards are being observed and met in child care centres. It's also responsible for the issuing of licences, the renewal of licences and, in many cases, the investigation of complaints, if there are any.

The provincial government at present, it's my understanding, spends \$971 million on child care in the province of Ontario: almost \$1 billion. That's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, I think you would agree. But it's also interesting that when we had the provincial budget in the spring and then the regurgitation of the budget in the summer, the budget promised \$33.6 million in new child care funding over three years, I understand. That sounds like a lot of money, but if you think of it in terms of a percentage of almost \$1 billion total, you're looking at an annual funding increase of around 0.01%, which is not as big an increase as I think the government would like people to believe. They certainly would want people to think that they are doing wonderful things in child care, and really they are keeping the funding for child care pretty much—actually, it's probably a real reduction when you consider inflation is approximately 2%. When they were in opposition, they would have called that a cut, but, of course, today they talk about a \$33.6-million increase over three years. Certainly if we were in government and, again, if we were increasing child care funding by that amount, they in opposition would have argued that that was a cut. But, anyway, we'll move on.

We know that this Bill 10 opens up a significant number of bills. It opens up and amends the Assessment Act; the Child and Family Services Act; the Day Nurseries Act; the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007; the Education Act; the Health Protection and Promotion Act; the Housing Services Act, 2011; the Income Tax Act; the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act; the Pay Equity Act; the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005; the Smoke-Free Ontario Act; and the Social Contract Act, 1993. So clearly a significant number of provincial acts will be amended by this bill if it is passed in its current form, again speaking to the complexity of the bill and again reinforcing why our critic, the member for Simcoe North, is right that we need to have extensive public hearings. It would be in the public interest to have this bill sent to a committee sometime after the House recesses for Christmas, perhaps in January when the House isn't sitting, when there's time, and have a standing committee of this Legislature, an all-party committee, travel the province, seek public input and listen to the concerns that might be out there about this bill.

**1640**

Our caucus position has been outlined by our critic and, I think, by a number of other speakers from our caucus who have had the chance to speak to second reading of this bill. We're saying that this bill proposes to spend more on child care while actually providing less child care. We're saying that it would actually mean spending more on a licensing regime and inspectors without increasing the number of child care spaces.

We're spending more on inspectors and the whole regime behind that without actually increasing the number of child care spaces. Of course, when you look at the value for money, you'd have to question whether or not this makes sense. Why would we spend more on child care while getting less in the way of spaces and service? I'm not sure that the Minister of Education has adequately answered that point that our critic has made, and I would certainly hope that, over the course of this debate, the government speakers will, in fact, address that.

We're saying as well that viability for child care in rural Ontario, once these rules are enacted—or, I should say, if these rules are enacted—would be hindered. Of course, rural Ontario is different than urban Ontario, as you know, Mr. Speaker. I'm privileged and pleased to represent a small-town and rural riding, largely, although I have a large community in Georgetown, a large community in Acton and a large community in Fergus and the Elora area. I also represent a large number of farm families and people who live on what would be known as rural properties in rural Ontario. You can't just have a one-size-fits-all policy. I think there has to be a recognition and understanding on the part of the provincial government that indeed rural Ontario has unique and special needs. People know each other; they know their neighbours. In many cases, communities are stronger in rural Ontario because people know their neighbours and they get to know their communities. They're active and involved in their community organizations, in their churches, whether it's helping out with the school councils or what have you. That's a real strength in rural Ontario. At the same time, I think there has to be a recognition on the part of the government that rural Ontario is different when it comes to the need to support child care and improvements to child care.

Our caucus is saying that there is a conflict of interest inherent in this bill, because in the case of this legislation, the municipality and the region would act as a licensee, and yet at the same time, in many cases, municipalities are also child care providers. So the sense is, is there a conflict of interest or not? If they're going to be the licensee as well as a provider, does that make sense? I think that's an important point that the government needs to address. I'm not sure that they have so far.

We know that regions are going to be seen as the licensees, or municipalities. We have the municipality that is also a child care provider. In effect, a competitor would be judging whether one can provide child care in a particular area or not, because the municipality would be given authority to revoke licences. Again, that leads to us to wonder whether or not a conflict of interest is present, and that would perhaps lead to considerable problems down the road if it was.

We believe that there needs to be a common and consistent approach to pedagogy, meaning that every child care centre should be subject to this. But we wonder about the fact that private business is able to offer something different, to offer programming in an environment that might be different.

This bill, we're told, will limit the number of available spaces for child care for children less than two years of age and will make child care more expensive. We believe that the centres should be given a period of time to address the financial impact of the new regulations and that third-party child care providers are important because they can provide additional values and services.

We say that more consultation is necessary to ensure a well-thought-out bill that will allow the opinions of as many people as possible to be heard.

Many unlicensed daycares, if this bill is passed—and we're very, very concerned about this—would be shut down, depriving parents of a place for their child to be looked after. As we know, a significant percentage of the care is unlicensed today.

We believe that this bill affects 70,000 child care providers and roughly 350,000 people in the province of Ontario. We are saying that parents may face a hike of 30% to 40% in daycare fees to make up for the shortfall of income to providers if this bill passes as it's currently written.

We're concerned that providers will perhaps lose an average of \$12,000 to \$20,000 of family income per year through the involuntary reduction of spaces or by being coerced to work for a licensed agency. That's a significant concern.

Due to the potential of being fined up to \$100,000, many providers may in fact go underground in order to continue to support their families. If these child care providers go underground, there will be absolutely no oversight. That's a serious concern as well.

We say that the red tape involved in starting up a licensed child care centre in the province of Ontario is cumbersome already.

We're questioning whether or not this bill will actually improve safety.

If there's extra money in child care, we should be reducing the cost for families.

Again, that is the position our critic has outlined over the course of his discussions in this House.

I think we have to move very carefully on this piece of legislation. We have the time to engage the public, to ensure that everyone who has an interest in this issue—whether it be for-profit providers, non-profit agencies, municipalities or individual families and parents—to ensure that we get this right. We're dealing with children, our most precious resource. Surely, our children, the future of our province—I think we're united, as a Legislature, that this is perhaps one of the most important issues the Legislature will deal with in this fall session. We've got to make sure we get it right. We can't forge ahead just because the government feels that they've got an agenda and they just want to ram it through the House.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the children of the province of Ontario to get this right, to take the time to get it right and to ensure that there are adequate public hearings. I think Mr. Dunlop, our critic from Simcoe North, is absolutely right that we need to do this.



As we continue with this debate, I certainly look forward to hearing the views of the other members. I think that there'll be significant input in this House.

I would urge the government members to participate in this debate. We have seen, from time to time, in debates on other bills, that it's the opposition that is taking up the majority of the debate time, and sometimes we're accused of slowing things down. We would encourage government members—all of whom recently consulted with their constituents in the month of May and early June and have heard a lot, I'm sure, about all the issues in their respective ridings, including daycare issues—to participate in this debate.

Most of us have House duty time, and we're here—but I think if this place is going to be meaningful, and if this place is going to be an effective legislative body, we're going to have debate on these issues. This child care issue, this Bill 10, is obviously a very, very important issue that we need to extensively debate.

I would challenge government members not just to listen to what the opposition is saying, but to go home to their own ridings, to seek out advice from their constituents, to go to the child care centres and the Montessori schools in their ridings and see what's going on. Bring that perspective and those ideas back into this House. Bring those ideas and perspectives back into the government caucus room and challenge the minister on some of the points that she has made, if you're hearing different things from what you've heard in the government caucus office, if you're hearing different things from your constituents. I think that's how we'll keep the minister on her toes, and how we'll ensure that this legislation is properly amended and that we'll get, in the end, the best possible bill that the people of Ontario deserve, quite frankly, but most importantly that the children of Ontario deserve. Certainly, it's our obligation, as members of the Legislature, to ensure that that happens.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence this afternoon. I've enjoyed having this opportunity to speak to Bill 10, and I look forward to the continued contribution of other members over the course of this debate at second reading.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

1650

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'm happy to spend a couple of minutes talking about this. Ontario has a child care crisis because we don't have enough licensed, non-profit, subsidized spaces to actually meet the needs of parents in this province.

Just as I talked earlier today about the lack of staffing in our nursing homes, the same situation arises in the Ministry of Education as it relates to daycare spaces. We have a government that is basically cutting 6% off most programs across the province. Education isn't one of them, but it's being flatlined.

Although they want to set up this registry, which is going to take on all of the unlicensed daycare centres, they only want to add six people to actually do that kind

of investigating and oversight—maybe 20,000 kids per staff. That is just unreasonable for anyone to expect from any one employee.

Of course, our federal leader, Thomas Mulcair, has introduced the notion of a subsidized daycare system across Canada, where parents could rely on \$15 a day as the max for children who would be in licensed, regulated, subsidized daycares across Canada. It seems to me that this is probably the way that we need to go. The province of Quebec has gone that way. If it's good enough for Quebec, why shouldn't it be good enough for parents and children in Ontario?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** At the outset, I would commend our colleague from the PC side, the member from Wellington—Halton Hills. I find his remarks always sensible and measured, and I think we will take to heart some of his comments in our deliberations.

I would, however, with respect, like to point out to the NDP that your most recent non-expired platform committed to a \$600-million further cut, and one would only assume that things like child care would probably be components of that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Actually, I have the floor just now, but thank you.

In any case, I hope that it can be seen by what the government is doing, essentially doubling the funding to close to now a billion dollars, increasing the number of child care spaces by 90,000, including 22,000 new licensed, non-profit child care spaces—also something that should be near and dear to the NDP, although they seem to be slightly missing in action, for which some of your chronic stakeholders called you on: the fact that you are not really supporting or really bringing as much attention as you might have in the past to, for example, the funding for things like early childhood education.

This government is committing something more than \$250 million to this field. There are annualized increases which are now set to occur, and I think between all of these things you can see that the government is taking measurable and concrete steps to increase the quality, the stewardship, the legality and the status of child care in Ontario. Is it everything? Is it everything that we would dream of? No. Is there more work to be done? As always, yes. But I hope that, even in the midst of the partisanship, you will at least acknowledge some part of the earnest commitment here.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm delighted to have a couple of moments here to respond to some of the issues that have been raised. I think the most important thing for the public to understand is that this bill purports to change the manner in which daycare is organized and supervised—two important words for what this bill stands for. I want to speak to, particularly, the issue of at-home daycare, because that happens to be the part of daycare

that is dealt with by most people; 80% have their children in at-home daycare. It is that group of people who right now feel that because they, under a technicality, are referred to as unlicensed, it somehow means they're illegal. Quite the opposite: They've been under the Day Nurseries Act for years and years and years, and certainly by their own admission, and by many parents', the fact that people still continue to flock there demonstrates the kind of work that they have done.

With legislation, it's always a question of balance, a balance between the issue of appropriate supervision and choice for families. In this piece of legislation, there's a third element, and that is the problem of public hearings because there's such a difference between the circumstances for young parents in small-town, rural Ontario than in urban centres. Their voices are lost in this discussion the way the bill is presented, without hearings.

I also want to say one more important thing about not getting it right. That is that child care is something that everyone is an expert on because you were a child once yourself and you are a parent or a grandparent or you know somebody. Everyone's an expert, so it's a very emotionally charged topic that quite frankly, we need to get right.

This government is taking a risk by not having hearings.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm pleased to speak on the Child Care Modernization Act. We have been hearing the terms "optimize" and "modernize" a lot this session, but I think the focus isn't just to make things newer, but rather to make things better.

Anyone in the province can tell you that Ontario has a child care crisis. Understand, though, that the crisis isn't whether we care. Most of us, I would argue, do care. It's whether we will actually do anything about it. We don't have enough licensed non-profit subsidized child care spots for our children. We do have a patchwork system with long lists, high costs and questionable safety.

As a New Democrat, I believe all of Ontario's children deserve safe high-quality care and early years programming. To that end, we agree with the government's recognition that a child care system is a matter of provincial interest. We've seen that it's also a matter of federal interest as well, looking at the priorities of the official opposition.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to sit with the leader of the official opposition, Thomas Mulcair, who visited Oshawa and hosted a community round table with parents and families and those concerned about child care challenges. Among those countless concerns, we heard that if families can find a child care spot, they pay the highest costs in Canada.

This bill won't reduce costs for parents or provide for additional subsidies to support families. Good legislation should work for the people, and we know the people of this province are working. They need their children taken care of so that they can do that work. They deserve safe, affordable, quality licensed options.

At that round table, locally, we heard concerns that are probably going to resonate across the province about challenges in child care: obviously, the waiting lists being unacceptable, issues that face parents who have recently graduated and are struggling to carry debt along with the cost of child care—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** —and parents of children with special needs—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member from Wellington—Halton Hills. You have two minutes for a reply.

**Mr. Ted Arnett:** I want to thank my friend the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, who gave me the opportunity to speak this afternoon for 20 minutes, again, to start my response.

We've heard from the member for Welland, the member for Etobicoke North, the member for York—Simcoe and the member for Oshawa. I think in their two-minute responses, they've all offered some interesting perspectives, and I appreciate their contributions.

Because of the rotation, of course, the New Democrats have two opportunities normally after an official opposition member speaks. Both of them talked about the commitment to child care from Thomas Mulcair, the NDP leader nationally. He brought out some sort of commitment with respect to child care.

I think that's something that has been promised before by the national leaders, not necessarily the New Democrats, but it has been something that has been talked about for years. I'm not sure what has stood in the way, but I suspect it's cost, most likely, in the end. When promises have been made for national child care programs and when the cost is all added up, it would appear perhaps to be determined to be something that is not affordable. At the same time, good for the New Democrats for promising it.

I want to express my thanks to the member for York—Simcoe for her comments especially. She talked about the need for balance in terms of whatever we do with respect to this bill and revisions to daycare programs and policies.

1700

In my riding, people's expectations for daycare programs are very reasonable, in my opinion. They expect to have access to high-quality daycare. They're concerned about quality and safety for their children, obviously, and they make sure that their children are put in a safe environment. They are concerned about the costs. So those are, really, I think the key concerns. But I think there's also an obligation and onus upon all three orders of government—federal, provincial and local—to work together to improve child care in the province of Ontario.

I'll conclude with that. Again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity this afternoon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.



**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this very important legislation today, Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act.

I would like to begin by talking a little bit about why this bill is in front of us. The history may be known to most of us here in the Legislature, but perhaps a short review would help the newly elected members of this House, as well as viewers at home who are watching today's debate. I will also review a lot of the information from the Ombudsman's report to this House, and I will speak to that later in my time.

The original Day Nurseries Act was first introduced in 1946 when, quite frankly, the world was a different place. In those days, most families did not have to use child care. One parent would work and be able to earn enough money to support a family comfortably while the other parent would stay home with their children. We all know that this simply is not the case today in 2014, and it really hasn't been the case for many years.

The act that was brought forward in 1946 was simply not prepared to deal with today's child care needs. The numbers that I was able to locate are from March 2013, and they provide a snapshot of what the needs are in comparison to its birth in 1946.

As of March 2013, there were 5,050 licensed child care centres in Ontario and 294,490 spaces in those licensed child care centres. The Ombudsman quoted a further 16,807 children in those 5,960 private home daycares affiliated with a licensed agency. This is only enough spaces for 20% of our children under the age of five. The government itself has admitted that only a fraction of children receive care in a licensed setting.

This is where it gets complicated, Speaker. It is abundantly clear that there are not enough licensed spaces for all families that need child care. It is a crisis situation that we've been trying to highlight for years. We know that many families rely on family members, grandparents, aunts or friends to help out, so that mom or dad can go to work. But not all families have those resources to pull from nor the funds to support the cost of today's child care. So the neighbour and the nice lady down the street began babysitting children and bringing money into their own households.

This created a whole section of child care that was not under the purview of the government other than the one single rule, which is the number of children that can be watched at one time, with no more than five children under the age of 10 in addition to their own children.

Now we have an estimate of 823,000 children in these informal, unlicensed settings. Remember, like I said previously, the only rule for these centres or homes is the number of children that they can have at one time. There are no spot checks or regulations to ensure that children are safe, and the only way the government would get involved is if there was a complaint about the provider.

Please don't get me wrong. There are many unlicensed home daycare providers who operate completely as if they were licensed. They get appropriate training and offer good programs and healthy food. These independ-

ent child care providers give a great service to our communities and the families that they serve. Unfortunately, there are unscrupulous people in this world, people who have abused and taken advantage of families due to their desperation to find child care. There are reports and true accounts of too many children in facilities who could not possibly get the care they need. They can be in dirty, damp, unsafe conditions.

When there are too many children, but for no other reason, they are called an illegal home daycare. Unfortunately, in the past few years, we have seen the terrible consequences of such a child care setting. Also unfortunately, many of these good unlicensed, independent providers feel vilified and accused due to the inaction of this government to deal with the bad ones.

Many who have contacted me asked for stricter rules to govern them. They know what they do. They know steps should be taken to make sure all child care providers are held to an acceptable standard, but they're not happy with the way this legislation has been brought forward.

Again, there are not nearly enough licensed spaces for families and there are not enough rules to hold the unlicensed sector accountable. So after years of this government's inaction to address the growing crisis in child care, let's take a closer look at the events that forced the government to act on their outdated legislation.

I know the government was recognizing a problem in 2010 when they decided to enact all-day kindergarten. When that happened, the child care file moved from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education, where it currently rests. To quote the Ombudsman, "It discovered it had inherited a legacy of dysfunction." They knew there were serious concerns, and yet they still did nothing about it.

Then, in January 2011, 14-month-old Duy-An Nguyen died in an unlicensed Mississauga daycare, where the provider was charged with murder. No actions were taken to correct the flaws apparent from this incident.

In July 2013, Allison Tucker, aged two, was found dead in an unlicensed child care in North York. Her provider is now charged with manslaughter. Still no action was taken on this file.

In July 2013, two-year-old Eva Ravikovich died in an unlicensed daycare in Vaughan. This daycare was illegally overcrowded, and there were at least 35 children who attended that daycare. When the police got there that day, there were 27 children in that home. Action finally happened, but it was too late to save Eva. It didn't have to be this way, because there had been several complaints about this child care setting before Eva died.

Remember, the only complaints that could be made were about too many children. Well, the ministry had received those complaints. In fact, they received five complaints specific to this one address, but they took no action and allowed them to continue to operate.

This child could have been saved if the Ministry of Education had done their job. The Ombudsman's response to this was, "Too little, too late."

Eva's family filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Education for \$3.5 million, but the ministry stated its position, in a notice of motion, that it "does not owe a duty of care." They claim that because it was an unlicensed facility, the ministry is not responsible. Does the government really believe they do not have a duty of care to the children of this province? The Ravikovich lawyer quickly rebutted that statement with the negligence of the government in not responding to complaints filed to the ministry regarding the number of children in this home.

There was only one rule that they were required to police, and they failed miserably. The minister herself admitted in this House that her inspectors had failed to respond to complaints in overcrowded unlicensed facilities.

In November 2013, a nine-month-old baby, Aspen Juliet Moore, died in an unlicensed child care facility. The minister states that there were no complaints about this facility, but without a proper reporting system or a registry, how can she truly know that?

That was four children deceased within a seven-month period.

1710

After the death of Eva Ravikovich, I wrote a letter to the Ombudsman asking him to do an investigation into the adequacy of the government of Ontario's protection of children in an unlicensed child care operation. It seemed very clear that the government was dropping the ball on this file, and it was a huge concern that our young children's lives were at risk as a result. The government needed to step up to the plate with changes to the sector that would suit the needs of today's families.

In April 2014, Bill 143 was tabled and debated, and it is now before us again as Bill 10. It is a very extensive bill that overhauls the legislative framework for our child care in Ontario by repealing the Day Nurseries Act and enacting the Child Care and Early Years Act. Some of the changes include: larger group sizes being allowed for licensed home care providers; extended day programs will be provided at schools for children up to grade 6 on school days; beefing up investigative powers; duty that a provider disclose that it is unlicensed; and several other measures.

But what's not included in Bill 10 is certainly more worrisome. It does not address the insufficient number of spaces in this licensed sector. It does not address the lack of affordable child care. It does add six more inspectors, but six is not enough to cover the province. It does nothing to include measures for unlicensed providers to be accountable—and I had previously suggested a registry, as did the coroner, as well. It does nothing to address the negligence of the ministry in protecting children in known illegal daycares.

The bill increases the number of children that a licensed provider can have, but lowers the number that an unlicensed can have. I don't believe that lowering standards in the licensed sector will create a better child care system.

The Ombudsman also had quite a bit to say about Ontario child care. His response to my request was a scathing 142-page report that was titled *Careless About Child Care*. Just the title alone sets the tone for a report about the lack of adequate child care in this province. Let's take a look at some of his report and his findings.

The Ombudsman made 113 recommendations for change. He revealed the legacy of dysfunction that was compounded by the shift from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education.

He spoke about the lack of tools that the ministry had in response to the complaints system. The system that was supposed to track complaints was outdated and did not track the unlicensed sector, and the complaints were treated as secondary to the branch's licensing responsibilities. Staff were completely backlogged and they were not able to keep up. In September 2013, 1,400 of the 5,295 licences had expired due to the insufficient number of staff; because of that, complaints such as the one in Vaughan fell through the cracks.

Ministry officials told the Ombudsman that they were drowning under the volume of work. One staff member said, "We're so busy ... It's not that we don't want children to be protected, but please don't go out looking for them because we can't handle what we have now."

The addition of six new inspectors: Does the government really believe that this is enough to fix the problem? The government needs to commit to real funding to address this issue, not just provide lip service to a crisis. The training that was provided to these inspectors and their learned behaviours to make up for the shortfalls included things such as calling to advise care providers that they were planning a visit. They conducted inspections over the phone. Inspections were not done in a timely manner.

Inspectors could not enter into facilities without being invited in. The inspectors had no teeth. After the ministry investigated 289 complaints in the year prior to the death of Eva, they only laid one fine of \$1,500.

This is clearly a case of neglect by this Liberal government and their negligence in dealing with unsafe conditions. The Ombudsman clearly stated that the Liberals have been sloppy, inconsistent, dysfunctional and neglectful, to name a few of the colourful adjectives he used for them. I'm concerned that this bill does a lot of lip service and changes ratios that even the coroner himself has recommended they not do.

On July 28, 2010, the death of two-year-old Jérémié Audette in Orléans focused attention on the issues of illegal daycares. Jérémié was taken by his unlicensed provider, without his parents' consent, to another unlicensed home daycare. There was a pool in the backyard. Jérémié accessed the pool unnoticed and drowned.

The inquest into his death in December 2012 resulted in 16 recommendations. Directed specifically at the ministry, they included ensuring that unlicensed home daycare providers are not allowed to care for more than those licensed through an agency, creating a registry for unlicensed caregivers, ensuring that the licensing process



involves first aid and CPR training requirements, and investigating opportunities for increasing the number of regulated home daycares.

This was in 2012, Speaker. Some of these recommendations by the coroner are still not implemented, and that is very concerning. The Ombudsman has also stated that things could be changed right now under regulation without the need of this bill. To my knowledge, no changes have been made as of yet. So, I think we need to go over this again, and what this bill does not address—the very real crisis in child care—in hopes of making some changes during the committee process.

It does not ensure sufficient annual investment to support more child care centres. It does not eliminate the huge wait-list for subsidized spaces. It doesn't stop the cuts to child care funding that are happening in 18 communities across our province. The government will still have no knowledge of where unlicensed child care is being provided. It doesn't adequately address the negligence of this ministry in protecting children in illegal home child care. It doesn't ensure that every complaint is investigated in a timely manner. It contains no legislative mandate for the ministry to hire an adequate number of inspectors. There is no requirement to publish inspection reports.

Speaker, these are some serious gaps in this legislation. The government that speaks of accountability and transparency is failing to listen to their own advice in one of our most vulnerable sectors.

I have to say that I am very proud of our federal New Democrat cousins in Ottawa. They have proposed a universal child care plan that would provide child care for \$15 per day, per child. It is a smart economic decision. Currently, fees are simply unaffordable for families. Child care in Ontario can cost \$70 to \$80 per day, up to \$20,000 per year.

Ontario families pay the highest child care costs in the country, and here are some examples: Quebec, \$152 a month for all children; Manitoba, \$631 a month for infants and \$431 a month for toddlers; Nova Scotia, \$825 a month for infants, \$694 for toddlers; Alberta, \$900 a month for infants and \$825 a month for toddlers. Meanwhile, the unfortunate families in Ontario pay an average of \$1,152 a month for an infant, but it can be as high as \$2,000 a month, and \$925 a month for toddlers. Manitoba, Quebec and PEI have set maximum fees, but in Ontario, every centre and home-based child care provider is responsible for setting their own fees.

High daycare costs generally hit parents when they have the least amount of money in their adult lives. They are just starting careers, paying off student debt and making mortgage payments. How can we possibly expect families to pay these extreme amounts while they give their children the best start to life?

A TD economist had this to say about child care: "For every dollar invested, the return ranges from roughly 1.5 to almost 3 dollars, with the benefit ratio for disadvantaged children being in the double digits." They have also been quoted as saying, "Further government

investment would go a long way to helping achieve a better system," and "the benefits of early childhood education far outweigh the costs."

This bill goes some way to addressing some of the problems, but when will this government make proper investments to truly address the child care crisis in our province?

1720

Speaker, I have had a lot to say in the last 20 minutes regarding this bill, and there is still so much to say about the gaps that we're facing with this bill. Yes, we need to make sure that we make changes. Bill 10 couldn't be more timely. We knew for years that it was outdated. There are changes that need to be happening, but we need to ensure that we're bringing our child care up to 2014-plus—that can handle the system.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'd like to just start off where my friend from Hamilton Mountain ended. It was actually your federal cousins that brought down a Liberal budget that had a national child care program that was probably the best we've ever seen. Ken Dryden worked for three years to broker that, and we've never had a government federally, before or since, that was ever able to broker that.

This government is spending more money on child care—in my community, Parents for Better Beginnings—early childhood education and more daycare spaces than we ever have. It would be nice if we could get consensus and we could actually get partisan politics a little bit behind this issue. I think there is some consensus around that, to actually do that kind of stuff, because we actually are—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would the member from Hamilton Mountain come to order.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** —one of the few countries that doesn't have a funded national child care strategy, and we need to do that. Quite frankly, municipalities and provinces in this country are carrying all of the freight and weight of the child care system; we simply have a federal government that is missing in action.

The honourable member opposite seems to have a little bit of an axe to grind on funding. You ran on the same fiscal plan that we ran on, minus \$600 million. If this was such a priority, why didn't you have, in your platform, \$600 million more for child care? We're actually increasing inspections and increasing funding.

The member makes a very good point about Manitoba, which I'm very familiar with. I was the mayor of the capital city for a number of years, and I worked for 12 years on the streets of the city with street-involved youth. I used to say that much of our child care money came from Ontario. Social services for settlement and for education and early childhood education, Alberta and Ontario pay most of that money. She's quite right when she says people in Ontario not only pay more as a percentage, but we also subsidize that right now because

of the way redistribution works. That seems to me to be unfair.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her presentation. It was not far from my house that the little girl Eva passed away in the daycare that had far more children than they were supposed to. As she rightly pointed out, families or neighbours—probably neighbours of the house—had been reporting that there was activity going on in the house, and they raised concerns.

You can have laws; we can debate laws and we can pass laws. But the reality is that if we don't enforce those laws, it's all quite meaningless and a big waste of all our time. I think that we need to enforce the laws that we already have, and we need to look at ways to make daycare affordable and safe for families.

We want communities where kids are going to baby-sitters or daycares or schools that are within their community. We might feel that we're making it safer for children to go to large, institutionalized daycares that are far from their home, but the reality is that we have to get those kids to those daycares. That has to be part of the equation, how they're going to travel to those daycares in a car, and the safety issues and the fact that the parents are having to deal with traffic, and by the time they get to the daycare in traffic, they are late for work.

These are all issues that we have to look at. We want our kids to grow up in the community, knowing their neighbours. We all know the expression "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, let's put some meaning to that, and let's encourage daycares, small ones, within the communities where the kids can get to know the other children in their neighbourhood and make lifelong friends. I think that's what it's all about. Let's encourage communities to keep an eye on houses where children are being cared for. Maybe we need some kind of hotline. Maybe we need public education.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Firstly, I want to say: Incredible kudos should go to the member from Hamilton Mountain. If it were not for her, we would not have what can only be described as an absolutely scathing indictment of this government on child care from the Ombudsman's office. She was the one who set that in motion. Thanks be to the member from Hamilton Mountain for doing that, first of all.

Second of all, to my friend across there who skipped town—I shouldn't say that, I know—the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would caution the member that we don't—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I know.

How many years and how many Liberals—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would caution the member. You've been here long enough to know that we don't refer to members, if they're not in the House, as being absent.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I know.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** You do know that. But when I see a willful attempt to do it, it does upset me.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To him, I would say: How many Liberals and how many years in power federally does it take to bring in a child care program? Ten, 20, 30? Because that's what we're looking at. To complain that we voted against the budget and therefore destroyed child care that could have been brought in by the Liberal government is nothing short of laughable.

The member from Thornhill is absolutely correct: Enforcement is where it's at. There is no enforcement in this province; that's the problem. The member from Hamilton Mountain talked about that. She talked about the fact that we've got 50-something enforcers, for tens of thousands of children, to investigate complaints. This is absolutely unacceptable. How could they possibly do their job? They can't.

Just to sum up what she already said: too little, too late. That's the real substance of this bill: too little, too late.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm delighted to be able to make a few comments on what I've heard from members across the floor and, indeed, our own member here.

Everyone, I think, agrees. We're all on the same page that children are our most precious resource and we have to do everything in our power to make sure that they're protected. I think we all understand that quality daycare, protective daycare, is something that is not only a nice-to-have, it's a must-have for our children and parents, especially parents who are struggling to make ends meet.

I just wanted to take some time to focus on some of the positive key aspects of this piece of legislation. I just want to walk through it for a second. In the absence of that national daycare program that was referenced earlier, some of the key things that leap out at me off the page—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** What are the keys, Chris?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Some of the keys: If passed, this legislation will increase the maximum penalty for illegal offences under the proposed act from \$2,000 to a quarter million dollars.

It would give the province the authority to issue administrative penalties so the province can act much faster to deal with issues—administrative penalties of up to \$100,000 per infraction by a daycare provider.

There have been some concerns about the number of children that can be covered under the act. Frankly, it will allow an increase in the number of children a licensed, home-based child care provider can care for from five to six, provided they're licensed, which means there are some controls in place.

One of the ones that I like the best: Amend the Education Act to ensure that school boards offer before-and-after-care for six- to 12-year-olds where it's warranted.

There are a number of very positive things in this legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now recognize the member for Hamilton Mountain. You have two minutes for your reply.



**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would like to thank the Minister of the Environment, the member from Thornhill, the member from Parkdale–High Park and the member from Newmarket–Aurora for their comments.

This is a bill that we know we all need to make sure we get through, and we need to make sure that we do the best thing for the children of our province. I know that is our intention. Sometimes we have different ways of getting to that view and to what that actual good bill would be, but that's why we have these debates. That's why we go to committee and talk to stakeholders: to make sure that we get everybody involved.

1730

I really think that we need to pay some attention to the independent child care providers. I think we need to make sure that we're listening to what they have to say. They are providing 80% of the child care in our province. They are a major piece of this puzzle. And for the ministry to vilify them and to make—quite frankly, they've victimized them, because they're talking about the unlicensed like they're all the illegal ones, and that's not happening. So that's something that I think is important that we need to do. We definitely need to make sure that we're enforcing the actions when they happen, because, yes, they have beefed up the penalties, but if they don't make sure that we get the investigation and the inspection right, the penalties are all for naught.

We need to make sure that we have a registry so that we know where unlicensed child cares are, because they want to be accountable, they want to be transparent, they want to have rules, they want to be able to participate in our society and to fill this absolutely critical need, as they're currently doing.

I'm really thankful for the opportunity to talk on this bill before it gets time-allocated.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to lend my voice to support the proposed Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, I listened passionately all afternoon to the debate from opposition members, as well as my own colleagues here. We all agree that children are a precious resource for all Ontarians. We all agree in this House: It is our collective responsibility to make sure we have tools to support the most vulnerable. This afternoon we heard a very compassionate proposed bill, by our colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, dealing with child actors. So maybe this afternoon we'll have a debate basically on children in Ontario.

I'm very pleased to lend my voice on this proposed legislation. I'm also very pleased that the Minister of Education took the opportunity, at the beginning of this new session, to bring in this proposed legislation very

early, to ensure that we can pass it, hopefully, before we recess this coming summer.

There are certain parts of the bill I want to address. It's very lengthy, as my colleagues said this afternoon.

The first section of the act I want to comment on—because I know there is an audience at home listening and watching this debate. The Day Nurseries Act has been enacted in Ontario since 1946. We need to move with the times. More importantly, when we change the proposed legislation, it must be based on best practices and be evidence-based. The portion of the legislation that the minister is proposing talks about strengthening the oversight of the province's unlicensed child cares. We, as a government, want to make sure we have a system that is responsive and dealing with safety, where high-quality daycare is being provided, but at the same time is supporting the families and parents in our community. We want to make sure that children, in terms of early development—there must be protection about that piece.

The other portion of the bill deals specifically with enforcement. This afternoon, the member from Thornhill talked specifically about making sure we have enforcement. If you look at the proposed legislation, schedule 1, part II—there are actually 14 sections; section 5 through section 19—is specifically called “Protective measures.” I know every member of this House would have an opportunity to read that particular section. I want to highlight certain portions of schedule 1, part II, “Protective measures.” One, it will give the province the authority to issue administrative penalties up to \$100,000 per infraction by a child care provider;

—increases the maximum penalty for illegal offences under the proposed act from \$2,000 to \$250,000;

—increases the number of children that a licensed home-based child care provider can care for from five to six; and

—clarify some of the programs that are out there.

But more importantly, a big portion of the legislation—and I'm not sure all the members have had an opportunity to review the legislation—talks about the enforcement piece. I know, again, my colleagues opposite talk about enforcement. It is absolutely true. If you have legislation without teeth in terms of inspectors, in terms of enforcement—ensuring that this has been explicitly stated. Section 5 of part II of schedule 1 deals with that piece.

The other piece of the bill talks explicitly about the whole issue of inspectors going into the premises. I wanted to take time to talk about that portion of the bill because, at the end of the day, those who are watching on television would not know and would not have a copy of the bill. We know that this proposed legislation will give inspectors the right to enter the premises without a warrant. I want to take some time to talk about that.

If passed, the legislation will allow the inspector to enter a premises without a warrant—that's clearly and explicitly stated in part IV, section 30 of the legislation—if the provider is operating under the authority of a licence, including home child care associated with a

licensed home care agency. This automatically allows the inspector the right to enter the premises. In the past you would have to have a warrant, or some of the bad operators would prohibit the inspector from entering the premises. If the legislation is passed, the inspector now has the right to enter the premises.

This provision of the legislation is no different than currently in the retirement home sector. Currently, in the retirement home sector, the inspector has a right to enter those particular facilities to inspect.

The province, if the legislation is passed, also allows the inspector to have the power and duty to inspect and examine records, demand documents and remove and/or copy records. Again, it provides greater clarity, and it provides opportunities for enforcement.

Also on the enforcement piece here, there have been concerns raised—and I know that in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, there are a number of unlicensed daycares, daycares run by family members, meaning the family members are overseeing the child, the grandchild or nieces and nephews. This legislation will exempt those particular operators.

I'm going to share some experiences with members of the House. For years, my mother has been looking after her grandchildren. The proposed legislation will permit her to continue to look after her grandchildren. She will be exempted from the legislation. Again, we need to ensure that there are explicit statements in the proposed legislation to allow relatives to look after their loved ones because, at the end of day, we need to ensure enforcement—as well as those who are unlicensed daycares because we know they exist all over the province of Ontario.

The other piece of legislation that is also very important is the fact that if the legislation is passed, it will require the Ministry of Education to publish the information of those who contravene the law. Again, this is something that I know in another sector. I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care would recognize that piece when we're dealing with long-term care, as well as others. We now have laws that require the disclosure, more transparency, of those who violate our legislation. We will publish that information so that those who are bad operators will be known. Those new parents looking for daycare, looking for licensed daycare, now know which operators in their community are breaking the law and are in non-compliance of the law, so they will not send their child to that particular daycare—again ensuring transparency, more openness on that particular in our legislation.

1740

The other piece of the legislation that I wanted to spend some time on—with respect to the comments made earlier by the member from Thornhill, there are extensive comments in the proposed legislation talking about communication. Since August of this year, the Minister of Education has launched an online tool to allow anyone across Ontario to have information about the Ministry of Education dealing with daycare. It provides people with information to confirm if their daycare is licensed or not.

It also allows an opportunity for individuals who are seeking more information about daycare—there will be a 1-800 toll-free telephone number so that communities in rural areas who need to contact the Ministry of Education now have an opportunity to make their call. The other thing about this toll-free telephone number is that it allows individuals to report any alleged complaints of unlicensed providers.

It also allows filing a complaint on those who are suspect, because we don't know until the inspector is on the premises; we have to be on the premises until it has been proven and there is evidence of an offence. We have to make sure there is evidence before the inspection. At the end of the day, in this proposed legislation, there are fairly lengthy, extensive pieces of the legislation that specifically deal with enforcement.

The other comment—I know the members from the third party talked about the daycare piece, and I know the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change spoke earlier. I'm very pleased that our full-day kindergarten is now providing new opportunities under the proposed legislation. If passed, the proposed legislation will amend the Education Act to place a duty on school boards to ensure that the programs they are offering include before- and after-school programs.

Those of us who came from the education sector before becoming MPPs heard about these kinds of concerns: that parents want a seamless day program, so that they can drop off their sons and daughters at school and have before-school programs, as well as extending the day with after-school programs. That is the right thing.

I'm going to end by saying that I encourage all members of this House to seriously think about what our purpose is here in the Legislature. We are here to ensure that especially the youngest citizens in our province are protected. The proposed legislation will do just that.

At the end of the day, we are all here for one thing: to ensure that the youngest citizens, meaning our children, are protected every day throughout the province. I encourage—and I heard it passionately in the debate this afternoon, and not just on the proposed Bill 10 but, as I said earlier, our colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek about the child actor protection act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everybody for this opportunity to talk about this bill, but more importantly, I encourage every one of us to expedite this bill so that we can go to committee to have a conversation and talk to our daycare sector operators.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I want to thank the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for all of her great input into this discussion. She mentioned protective measures in the new bill; I think that, before we create new legislation with new protective measures—I'm assuming that they're new protective measures that aren't already needing to be enforced—we need to focus on enforcing the protective measures that are already in place. There seems to be a lack of oversight, a lack of inspectors.



Maybe we need a better system, as I mentioned before, for reporting any concerns that neighbours might have. Maybe we need a public awareness campaign to let people know that we are expecting input from the community; that if they see too many children in an unlicensed daycare, maybe this is who they should be reporting it to, and that it's going to be taken seriously—that they will be treated anonymously. I think that is always a concern: Neighbours don't want to be ratting out other neighbours and have it known about the neighbourhood.

She also mentioned seamless day programs, which is that parents want daycare for a couple of hours, then kindergarten, then daycare at the end of the day, because we all know that the work day is far longer than the school day.

Well, that's a great idea and I certainly understand why parents want that; it's certainly what I wanted. But unfortunately, most schools aren't implementing the seamless full-day program that parents were promised. Maybe we have to address that before we worry about enforcing new measures that make life even more difficult for parents. Maybe let's focus on bringing out that seamless full-day program that the parents so desired.

You know what? I think that we need to have input and I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this new legislation. I hope that parents and daycare workers and, yes, even grandparents and neighbours get to have input as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member for Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House, and, today, to speak on Bill 10, Child Care Modernization Act, and in response to the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. I listened to her remarks and I think we all agree that we want what's best for our children. We definitely want to make sure our children are all safe.

I might not have a lot of time to talk on this bill because it might be time-allocated like other bills, so I'd like to give a shout-out to some of the organizations.

When my children were young, there was a program in my rural area for child care for farm families, because often farm families are forgotten in the child care talks. And you know what? We were starting out, we had a big mortgage to pay, and that program had a lot to do with our success on that farm, and it kept our kids safe. That's one of the things that, by crunching this up—they're hurrying to do this now, but one thing people at home have to remember is that this government has been in power for over a decade. What's spurring this rush to the podium for this bill is several tragedies, followed by an Ombudsman report spurred by one of our members, and now we're rushing to get things fixed. But in that rush—and I find this over and over again with this new government—the rush is central: "We'll worry about the peripheries after. We'll rush debate; we'll rush at committee. We'll maybe have the committee meeting in

Toronto." But this province is much, much larger than Toronto and daycare is much, much larger—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It is a great pleasure to speak on this bill and especially to follow on comments from the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. I've known the member for—I don't want to say it—almost 30 years. She was tirelessly advocating for children back then, and I see her still doing it now. It's just fantastic.

My own experience in daycare comes from, as a parent, when my first daughter, Robin, was born. Her mother, after about six months, wanted to go back to work. I was working at a consulting firm, and I went and said, "I'd like to take some time off to be with our six-month-old." Unfortunately, we didn't have parental leave back then, in the old days. I worked with a labour relations firm at the time and they just wouldn't grant it; they didn't think it was sending the right signal. I insisted, and eventually I just quit. I went home and I was the primary caregiver for about a year and a half with my daughter Robin, and then we went into an unlicensed situation with home care and it was extremely positive. As a parent, I went in and spent some time with my daughter at the new location. We all felt very comfortable with it.

I've often said that the most important thing that men and fathers can do for equality for women in the workplace is to actually take that time out with their children and spend some time with them so the women can go back to work and it doesn't become a source of discrimination in employment and such, because if men are taking that time too, it won't discriminate against women.

After about two years—my daughter stayed in that daycare setting and went into a wonderful licensed facility in my neighbourhood called Children's Circle, and had a wonderful early childhood upbringing before she went into school full-time and attended part-time. It was the same thing with my second daughter, whose mother, Laurie, spent that time for the first two years of her life at home because she had a home business, and then she went to Children's Circle.

We know that the legislation here is about protecting children's safety. I don't see the concern that people are having that we won't have enforcement out there for all the unlicensed spaces. Like the Employment Standards Act, we will have the opportunity to go in with inspectors under a complaint-based situation, and that's a huge movement forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, and the speech of the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

Mr. Speaker, I know that our critic the member from Simcoe North is quite concerned about this bill. In fact, he has been involved with many different groups that

have been holding rallies and protests with regard to this bill, so that concerns me. His ask is simply that the government take the time to let the people who have concerns with this bill have their voice; that in the process of the legislation going through the Legislature, there be time for committee hearings around the province. I think that's a reasonable request.

In the first iteration of this bill, prior to the spring election, I was called by the Muskoka Montessori School in Huntsville, who asked if I would spend a morning at the school. I went into the class that has the youngest kids in it. I sat on a little stool in the middle of the class and spent a couple of hours in there and just watched what was going on. I have to tell you that I was really impressed with what I saw. I learned a thing or two, as well. Those young kids were all really polite. They were coming up and offering me snacks, this stranger sitting in the middle of the class. I was impressed with the life skills they were teaching them: how to fold laundry and all the basic things we should all know how to do; how to look someone in the eye and, as I say, be respectful and polite. This school had concerns with this legislation, because it would basically characterize them as a daycare instead of a school, and it is very much a school. If it's going to mean that this school that I was so impressed with would not be able to do what they're currently doing, I have concerns.

I hope the government takes the time to listen to the people of the province and travel around the province to get input so this legislation is improved.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I refer back to the member for Agincourt. You have two minutes.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I want to thank all the members who contributed to the debate this afternoon. I was particularly thrilled to hear the two male members opposite who were debating this particular bill, Bill 10. We all hear compassionate stories about different versions of day-care, but more importantly, we all love children across Ontario. This is what this bill is about. At the end of the day, I was very pleased and very touched by the comments made by our colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka about his experiential learning. I also heard from our colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane about the families in rural areas.

When this bill goes to committee, I am sure there will be amendments and there will be more discussion.

More importantly, at the end of the day, I believe each one of us in the Legislature values our youngest citizens and we are doing our utmost to protect them. We do not want to hear of more tragedies, whether it's in my riding or any other riding, because we're here for one job and one job alone: to protect the youngest and the most vulnerable.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, November 3, at 10:30 a.m.

I just want to wish all of you happy trick-or-treating.

*The House adjourned at 1754.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brook	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Mike Colle, Grant Crack  
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Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece  
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Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren  
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Todd Smith  
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Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon  
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Han Dong, John Fraser  
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield  
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi  
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry  
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter  
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry  
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioe Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas  
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon  
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas  
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat  
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Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioe Lim



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First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 3 November 2014

Lundi 3 novembre 2014



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 November 2014

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 novembre 2014

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's a pleasure to introduce the family of page captain Noah Bolton. He's here from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. MPP McNaughton couldn't be here; he's asked me to introduce Noah's sister Emma; his parents, Raymond and Melissa Bolton; as well as his grandparents, Bill and Audrey Gough and Richard and Louise Bolton.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It gives me great pleasure today to welcome Terry Yaldo to Queen's Park, the owner of Midway Convenience in my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. He's here today as part of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association lobby day at Queen's Park, and I look forward to meeting with him and his colleagues later today.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to welcome Nurgul Makhambetova. She is the mother of our page captain today, Erik Webb, who is from the great riding of Ottawa Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to introduce someone from my riding. He's a great champion for the local food movement. He's here with the Ontario Convenience Stores Association. I'd like to welcome Neil Kudrinko from the village of Westport to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It's with great pleasure that I want to welcome to Queen's Park Claudio Ricci, the honourable mayor of the city of Assisi in the Umbria region in Italy—the city of peace and dialogue—and the official attaché, Mr. Carlo Procacci, and a production company who will be filming in Canada and in Italy a movie on the life of St. Francis of Assisi: Mr. Jack Lenz, Mr. Daniele Procacci and Mr. Walter Simone. Thank you and welcome.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to introduce to you, in the members' gallery, Ms. Arlene Plaxton. She's the president of the Midland and Penetanguishene homebuilders' association. It's good to have you here, Arlene.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to welcome three of my constituents from Kitchener–Waterloo. Vernon Stuart-Dolmage and his parents, Jay and Heather, are here. It's their first-time visit to Queen's Park. Welcome.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Today is Tourism Day at Queen's Park, and joining us in the gallery are members

of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, including president and CEO Beth Potter and board chair Terry Mundell and many other representatives from the tourism sector.

I also would like to recognize Anthony Alfred, who is sitting in the members' gallery today. He's a former colleague of mine from ABC Life Literacy.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm looking for the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. It's his birthday today. We affectionately refer to him as the duke. There he is. Let's all wish the duke a happy birthday today.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am delighted to welcome John Winston from Tourism London to the House today. This is a man who does not rest until every hotel room in London is filled.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** On behalf of MPP Monte McNaughton of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, I'd like to congratulate page captain Noah Bolton and welcome to the Legislature his mother, Mellissa Bolton; his father, Ray Bolton; his sister Emma Bolton; his grandmother Audrey Gough; and his grandfather Bill Gough. They're here in the public gallery this morning. Welcome.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'm pleased to introduce representatives from the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, including CEO Dave Bryans and the chair of the board of directors, Mr. Ron Funk. Dave and Ron are joined in the gallery by many independent and familiar chain convenience store retailers, including my constituents from Mississauga South, the Rabba family of Rabba Fine Foods.

The OCSA will be meeting with various MPPs throughout the day and will host a reception this evening in the legislative dining room.

I welcome you to Queen's Park and wish you all a successful day.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Please join me in welcoming, from Belfountain Public School in the beautiful riding of Dufferin–Caledon, students and class teacher John McKeown.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It gives me great pleasure to welcome my best friend, Hugh Mackenzie, manager of the Kingston 1000 Islands tour company. I was best man at his wedding, and he was there for me.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Today I'd like to introduce members of the Lung Association of Ontario who are joining us for question period: Sherry Zarins, John Chenery, Kait Wallace, Vicki Poulos, Connie Choy and Chris Yaccato.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions?



I, too, would like to offer my birthday wishes to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, as a friend.

One other birthday that I'm sure you'll all agree deserves a little recognition: Our Deputy Clerk, Todd Decker, is celebrating a birthday today. I couldn't get it out of him, but—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Thirty-nine.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thirty-nine.

Also in the House, in the Speaker's gallery today, are friends of mine on a personal level: Mike and Lynda Woodburn, Patricia Woodburn and John Kocsis. Welcome to Queen's Park to observe today. Thank you for being here.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Premier.

Premier, last Thursday the Standing Committee on Public Accounts tabled its report on the scandal-plagued Ornge air ambulance service. It was the unanimous finding of the committee that Minister Matthews was not diligent in pursuing red flags pointing to serious problems at Ornge.

Premier, how can you give the minister the position of President of Treasury Board when she has a proven track record of mismanagement and failed oversight?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I understand, as you've said, that the report was tabled, following up on a motion that was led by our Liberal members. It's a great step. I'm glad that the report has been tabled, Mr. Speaker.

I'm also very glad that there are measures that we believe must be taken that are included in the legislation, that are now in the accountability act; measures that the former Minister of Health was very clear needed to be put in place to make sure that the oversight that's necessary at Ornge is in place.

Given the concern that is being expressed by the Leader of the Opposition, I hope that he and his colleagues will work very quickly with us to get that legislation passed and get those measures in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

1040

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, in 2012 your current Minister of Health's director of communications wrote that "staff shortages, delayed responses to save money, poorly designed interiors in brand new helicopters, and a money trail that disappeared in a complex web of for-profit spinoffs were among the litany of problems."

In addition, on May 4, 2011, the Ontario Air Transport Association sent a five-page letter to the current Deputy Premier, Ms. Matthews, detailing major issues at Ornge, such as conflicts of interest and deficiencies with the medical quality-assurance programs.

Premier, maybe you can shed some light: Why did the Deputy Premier take no action at that time?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's actually not the case. The former minister did take action. In fact, it's why there is legislation in front of this House, legislation that would provide greater oversight and deal with many of the outstanding issues. The fact is, there are many changes that have been made at Ornge, and I know the Minister of Health will want to speak to those.

But the other fact is that we have legislation before this House. There is a bill that includes the oversight measures that need to be put in place. That legislation has already received some debate. I hope the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues will work with us to get that piece of legislation passed so that those measures can be put in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** As a former Minister of Health, I can tell you that you don't need new legislation to perform your duty and oversight to the people of Ontario. She had all the authority she needed.

Premier, the million-dollar lawsuits against Ornge—there were several—for delay in transport and poor patient care in the years 2007, 2010 and 2011 should also have been red flags for the former health minister. The current Deputy Premier did not take action, as former health minister, until 2012—and that was in December of 2012—by which point patients in Ontario had died or suffered amputations because of Ornge's negligence. I remind you that the minister was first appointed Minister of Health in October of 2009.

Premier, patients have been put at risk because of your minister's failure to do her job on the part of Ontarians. Will you show real leadership, take responsibility for those patients' deaths and demand the Deputy Premier's resignation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I have to say that I welcome the report on Ornge from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Our government, as well as Ornge, has taken many steps to restore the public's confidence in the province's air ambulance service by ensuring that it's accountable, puts patients first and respects public dollars. Of the 67 concerns mentioned in the report that was tabled last week, 31 require action. Of those 31 that require action, the ministry has acted upon or is acting upon 28 already.

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Premier. The Ornge air ambulance fiasco could have been prevented if your former Minister of Health took action. But we all know she did not. Her failure to acknowledge concerns that were brought to her attention numerous times sadly resulted in the deaths of four dedicated crew members. Not only did the minister ignore letters from those con-

cerned; she intentionally chose not to be open and transparent after the crash.

Regarding the OPP investigation into the crash, the all-party committee wrote, "The minister missed an important opportunity to make a public statement regarding the findings in the interests of promoting transparency."

Premier, we've known all along that your government's openness and transparency is suspect, so here is your opportunity to prove your commitment. Your minister failed in her role to protect Ontarians and then intentionally kept quiet about it. If you really believe in openness and transparency, you'll do something about it. Premier, will you ask for your Treasury Board minister's resignation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I reject the premise of the question. The fact is that action was taken as soon as the former Minister of Health had information—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Quiet.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I don't need the help.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member opposite knows full well that there were massive changes made at the Ornge organization. He also knows that there is action that is under way right now. Action has been taken by the Ministry of Health—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew, come to order. The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —and furthermore, he knows that there's a piece of legislation before this House that would make further changes to improve oversight at Ornge. That bill has been before this House, Mr. Speaker, it needs to be passed and I hope that, given the concern emanating from across the floor, they will work with us to get that legislation passed.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again to the Premier: What you rejected is openness and transparency to the people of Ontario.

Premier, after the fatal crash, a man named Richard Jackson testified before committee. Mr. Jackson is the director of the air ambulance program oversight branch, which obviously failed to do its job. Despite this, he testified to the committee that provincial organizations do not require increased oversight or even the existing level of oversight given to Ornge.

The all-party committee strongly disagreed with Mr. Jackson's statement. In fact, Premier, the all-party committee wrote that the problems with Ornge "could be attributed primarily to the absence of due diligence and oversight on the part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care."

It's obvious that both your former Minister of Health and her senior staff don't see any issue with what they've done or egregiously didn't do.

Premier, will you show Ontario you are sorry and ask for your Treasury Board minister's resignation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let's just check the facts here. There has been a piece of legislation before this House since 2012, in an attempt to make further changes—because as I said, there were already changes. There have already been changes made at Ornge to improve oversight, to change the personnel. There has been a piece of legislation since 2012 before this House. It is once again before us. The opposition has stalled at committee for more than a year, has not allowed the legislation to go forward.

So I say to the members opposite: Given their concern, given the anxiety that is emanating from the other side, I hope that they will change their current trajectory and they will work with us to get that legislation passed and make sure that these final provisions can be put in place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again to the Premier: It's obvious you won't make the right decision and ask for your former Minister of Health's resignation, so let me spell this out for you again.

The report, written by members of all parties, clearly establishes a pattern of serious negligence. Your minister failed time and again to do her job. While you want to talk about trust, openness and transparency, this pattern clearly invokes the exact opposite.

Given the clear pattern of negligence exposed in this report and the 17 charges laid by the federal Ministry of Labour against Ornge, and thus your government, you would have thought the minister would do the honourable thing and step down. Instead, your government has shown that it will not be accountable to the people of Ontario.

Premier, this isn't just dollars and cents we are talking about today; it is mistakes your minister made that contributed to the deaths of four Ontarians.

Premier, I will ask you again: Will you demand the President of the Treasury Board's resignation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's important to understand that Ornge is well into a new chapter. It's putting the care of patients first. In fact, it transports almost 18,000 patients in a single year.

These are the changes: We've made patient care its number one priority. We have a new performance agreement in place with Ornge; a new conflict-of-interest policy; a patient advocate, Denise Polgar, who works with patients to resolve their concerns. Ornge is now subject to freedom of information.



And of course, as the Premier has mentioned, for two years we've had legislation in front of this House to pass, which will make further positive changes to Ornge. We look forward to the co-operation of the party opposite.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. On August 22, Ed Clark, the Premier, Ministers Matthews and Sousa, and the chiefs of staff to Ministers Chiarelli and Duguid were joined by the Premier's chief of staff, principal secretary and five top deputy ministers. Of this august group, whose idea was it to privatize local hydro utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, this exercise of looking at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and making sure that they are working for the people of Ontario and that in fact we can invest in the assets that we need now in 2014 and going forward—we ran on this. We made it very clear that optimizing assets and making sure that we could invest in the transit and transportation infrastructure that's needed was a priority for us, and that is exactly what we're following through on. That's the work that Ed Clark has done with his team. He has given us some recommendations.

Guarding the public interest but making sure that we have the ability to invest in infrastructure going forward—that has been a cornerstone of our economic policy. It's what we ran on and it's what we're doing.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, we know that the Premier, along with senior advisers, were meeting with Ed Clark early in 2014. In fact, it looks like the Premier was planning to privatize local hydro utilities a full four months before the budget came down. That sort of privatization will drive up bills across Ontario. Why did the Premier wait until after the budget and after the election to talk publicly, specifically about her real plan to privatize local hydro utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, let's just be clear: Despite what the NDP are saying, we asked the council to retain the government's long-term ownership of these assets. In fact, what Ed Clark said, on October 17: "We recommend keeping all three companies—OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO." So, in fact, there is not a sell-off of these companies, as the NDP would like people to believe.

But the fact is, the leader of the third party is so trapped in her ideology that she is not able to see the responsible path forward. In fact, she has not supported the investment in transit; she has not supported the investment in infrastructure. All she can do is stand and criticize a path forward that we ran on and we are now implementing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, it's the people of Ontario who are trapped in sky-high hydro bills that come from privatization from both that party and that party; that's who's trapped.

According to records that we've obtained, the Premier began meeting with her privatization adviser a full nine months ago. They were having extensive meetings that involved senior cabinet ministers and deputy ministers. But the Premier kept those plans secret. She still won't say what occurred in those meetings. Is this the sort of openness and transparency that we can expect from this Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, the premise of this question is that somehow it would be irresponsible for a Premier or a leader to begin to think about the issues that he or she wanted to run on or the issues that would be contained in a budget sometime before those issues. In fact, the premise of this question says, "Just make it up on the back of a napkin. That's actually the way to do planning."

That's not how we work, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, I have been clear that we were going to look at our assets. It is included in our budget, and the leader of the third party can look it up in the budget on page 20 and in our Liberal plan, page 4. We were very clear in our budget and in the plan that we brought to the people of Ontario that we were going to look at these assets. We were going to have experts look at the assets and make sure that they were operating, that they were optimized so that we could invest in infrastructure. That's what we're doing.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** But she didn't tell the people she was planning to privatize hydro.

My next question, Speaker, is to the Premier. New Democrats have uncovered records showing that the Premier's privatization adviser, Ed Clark, has been hiring a number of consultants.

Our question is a clear one and it's a simple one: Who are those consultants who are telling the government that they should be selling our public assets?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, Ed Clark is working with a team of people; that is absolutely true—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Frances Lankin.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —including Frances Lankin. He is working with people who understand the value of the assets and understand how to make sure that they're optimized. He is speaking to experts; that is exactly true. He is talking to people who understand, in the financial world, how to make sure that we make the best decisions possible. That's the responsible thing to do.

It would be irresponsible for these to be political decisions. These are decisions that need to be made based on the evidence and based on the advice from people who have the expertise. Ed Clark has gathered the people and gathered the advice that he needs in order to advise us in the most responsible way.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, on March 29, 2004, a member stood up in this House and said that “consultants were expensive and of questionable value to the taxpayers of Ontario.” Now that same member, the current Premier, is paying consultants to help sell off our public assets.

How much public money has been paid to consultants to help privatize our local hydro utilities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, take just about any sentence out of context and you can do anything you want with it.

The fact is, we have reduced the number of consultants to government in an ongoing way. That generic statement about consultants—yes, I think it’s very important that we only ask consultants to work with us when we don’t have the expertise in-house. In fact, the previous government had gotten rid of so many people in government that it was necessary to bring that expertise in. We have done that and we have reduced the number of external consultants.

But when there is a specific question that needs to be addressed and when there is a time-limited issue that needs to be dealt with, it is entirely reasonable that there be people who are experts who give advice on that. That’s what’s happening here so that we can have the best advice and make sure that the assets that will continue to be owned by the people of Ontario work for them to the best advantage.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Whether it’s eHealth, IT consulting, paying Don Drummond \$1,500 a day for his austerity plan or paying Metrolinx consultants to create bogus Twitter accounts, this government has a pretty dismal record when it comes to consultants. Now the Premier, who says she wants to lead the most transparent government in all of Canada, is refusing to say who has been hired to privatize hydro and how much they’re being paid.

Why is the Premier more interested in the financial well-being of a few consultants than in being honest with the Ontarians who she works for?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** If the leader of the third party were interested in a briefing from Mr. Clark on the work he’s been doing, I’m sure we could arrange that. I think he has provided information to the opposition parties, but we would be happy to set that up again and let the leader of the third party get that information.

But let’s not forget what we’re talking about here. What we’re talking about is making sure that we, as government, can invest in the infrastructure that we know is going to be needed now and in the future, just as people in this Legislature decades ago invested in infrastructure that we needed for today.

We are going to continue this work. We are going to invest in transportation infrastructure, including transit, because if we don’t do that, then our children and grandchildren will not have the infrastructure they need. We must make that investment now.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is to the Premier. For the last several days we’ve heard disturbing stories in the media surrounding CBC Radio host Jian Ghomeshi—in particular that his co-workers raised concerns with their superiors about Mr. Ghomeshi’s alleged behaviour toward them and that those concerns were not acted upon. That media attention is now bringing to light many other instances where complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace have not been taken seriously in Ontario.

Premier, will you agree to striking an all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace and help women and men to be made to feel safer at work in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I thank the member opposite for the question. This is obviously a very serious and disturbing issue. I have already asked my staff this morning to give me a briefing on exactly what the procedures are. I know that the minister responsible for women’s issues is prepared to speak to this as well.

I just want to say that this is an issue that affects every single one of us. It affects all of us in all our work situations across society, quite frankly, and it affects every single one of us in the sense that we all have to be vigilant and not pretend that, somehow, this issue has been resolved because it’s 2014 and we’ve moved on. It’s very real; what has happened over the last week has made it clear that it’s very real. We have to continue to be vigilant in every way that we can in all parts of our lives.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Back to the Premier: The pervasive problem of sexual harassment in the workplace is not confined to just the CBC. Just this past July, my colleague the member from Dufferin—Caledon and critic for the Attorney General brought to light the issue about an assistant crown attorney in Peel region. Rather than investigate a workplace harassment complaint made against that crown attorney, your Attorney General allowed him to resign and gave him a one-year salary bonus of over \$180,000. The problem is clearly happening in your own government under your watch.

1100

Again, Premier, will you agree to striking the all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace, to provide effective recommendations to combat this serious issue facing women and men in the workplace?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I am open to considering what we collectively can do going forward. As I say, I think this is an issue that is with us. It’s something that’s extremely important. It starts with kids in school. How do we make sure that we educate our children so that they are aware of what’s appropriate, what’s not appropriate? How do we then set up the structures to make sure that people are kept safe?

I’m open to doing whatever it is we need to do going forward. I’m not going to commit to a specific process at this moment. As I said, I’ve already asked my staff to



pull together the information we need to know in terms of what we should be doing going forward, but I'm open to having a conversation with the opposition parties about what we might do collectively.

### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Premier. On Thursday, New Democrats moved a motion in the gas plants committee so that we would ensure that Peter Faist and Laura Miller could come and testify about the wiping of computers in the Premier's office.

Every Liberal member of the committee voted against hearing from Peter Faist, the man who the police allege used military-grade software to wipe computers in the Premier's office. They also voted against hearing from Laura Miller, the deputy chief of staff who apparently brought him in.

Ontarians looking for answers just had the door slammed in their faces. Why is this government only content to promise accountability and transparency but never actually deliver on it?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member opposite for asking the question. I remind the member opposite that, in his own question, he talked about a police allegation, which means that the investigation the police are conducting right now should remain the primary focus.

The police have been working on this issue. We should let the OPP conduct an investigation. During the committee hearings, when former OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis came, and the detective who has been working on this case, Mr. André Duval, they both said that the parliamentary committee should not be interfering in a live police investigation. We should respect the OPP's authority and let them finish their work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The Liberals voted on Friday to continue to barricade the truth from coming forward in regard to the gas plant scandals. The members from Durham, Scarborough Southwest, Mississauga-Streetsville, Halton and Beaches East-York voted to protect Laura Miller and Peter Faist. They voted to protect Liberal insiders. They voted to deny Ontarians answers about the veil of secrecy around the \$1.1-billion gas plant scandal. Liberals wiped computers in the Premier's office to whitewash the gas plant scandal. Now Liberal members are protecting the insiders who did the wiping.

Again I ask the question: Why is this government only content to promise accountability and transparency but never actually deliver on it?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Let's examine the facts here. For three years, committees of the last Parliament have been looking into this particular matter. Over 90 witnesses have appeared before the committee and have been examined by the committee. And 145 hours of testimony have been presented, and over 400,000 documents have been considered by committee.

Speaker, it is time to start the report writing. In fact, even the members of the third party—the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton himself, back in April, a few days before the election was called, had put forward a motion in the justice committee that the committee should start the process of report writing.

We are happy to see that the members of the committee have decided to work on the report. It is time that we get recommendations from the committee on the things that they've been able to analyze during the investigation.

### TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My question is for the Premier in her role as the intergovernmental affairs minister. Welcome back, Premier, I had the chance to sit in your chair last week while you were away and will say that the view is very different down there.

Trade missions are a key part of developing our economy here in Ontario. According to the Conference Board of Canada, about every \$100-million increase in exports creates about 1,000 new jobs. Developing relationships with foreign governments and businesses can certainly help to us to grow our economy, and China is a very key player. Last year, our goods to China increased an astounding 10%. That is \$2.2 billion.

Speaker, can the Premier please inform this House of the success of this trade mission and what it means for jobs and the economy here in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I was very pleased to have the opportunity to travel to China with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Did you walk down the Great Wall?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —because it's so important that we have a partnership with this huge economy which is China.

We also travelled with 60 businesses and organizations, so this is about government facilitating the connections between businesses here and businesses in China. In order to do that, we needed to make that contact.

What happened was, our mission attracted new investments that will create new jobs. This is a two-way street. This is about investment in Ontario, and it's about partnerships with businesses in China. I'm pleased to tell the House that Ontario attracted about \$1 billion in new investment by Chinese companies, and that will lead to the creation of 1,800 new jobs right here in Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll jump to warnings, if you want.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'd like to thank the Premier for that answer and for all her efforts to bring jobs to the province of Ontario. I was very excited to learn, as many other people were in my riding of Kitchener Centre, that we are going to be getting a new steel nail manufacturing plant in our community. That's about 80 jobs, so that is really great news.

I know that there are other communities that are also going to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek will come to order. In the next voice, I'll probably ask him to get to his seat so I can admonish him even further. The Minister of Energy will come to order as well.

Finish, please.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I mentioned the new plant coming to Kitchener. There are other communities that are also going to benefit from this trade mission.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier offer some other details on other success stories from her trade mission in China?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you for the question. It was really a great trade mission. It was great because it was very, very successful. This successful mission reinforced the strength of Ontario's companies and the Ontario brand globally.

I want to tell the House about some of the trade deals that were signed during the mission.

Huawei announced a major expansion to its Ontario operations, valued at \$210 million, that will create 325 jobs, including 250 positions for engineers and researchers and at least 75 new marketing, sales and support positions.

Yiwu North America announced a \$100-million investment to establish a new trading centre in Stouffville. The first phase of the project is expected to create 800 jobs.

These investments confirmed that China values the skills—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

1110

## COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, I've asked you previously to reverse the Central West CCAC's decision to limit the number of new patients it helps, due to its supposed lack of funds. What I find interesting is that while the Central West CCAC continues to claim they don't have enough money, their CEO was given another \$24,000 increase in her salary in 2013, which brings it up to—wait for it—\$267,333.47 a year.

Minister, why is front-line care consistently prioritized below executive care at the Central West CCAC?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the investments that we're making through our LHINs to our CCACs to increase our investments on that important area of home and community care.

This year alone, we've increased our investments in home and community care, including to the South West LHIN, by \$260 million. That number actually is going to increase to \$750 million by 2017.

We understand that it's important—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is warned.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I know the member opposite understands that we have a formula as well, as we look to our LHINs, that have that local and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:**—expertise, to make sure that our CCACs are receiving the funding they require, based on need and the services that they provide.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Minister, I think it's time for you to start asking some questions about where those investments are going, because clearly they're not going to the right place at the Central West CCAC.

My office continues to receive regular complaints about the Central West CCAC's failure to provide access to personal support workers. In one example, an 87-year-old man who suffered a severe heart attack has been refused access to a PSW. Instead, his daughter was expected to care for him, but she too has physical ailments that limit her capacity to care for her dad.

You have allowed CEO salaries to continue to increase while ignoring the core services of front-line care. Minister, I asked you this in July, and you ignored me. I'll ask you again today: When will you prioritize front-line services over executive pay at the Central West CCAC?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Actually, I apologize. I meant to say Central West CCAC in my first response.

For this entire government, the issue of executive compensation within the broader public sector, including our CCACs, is an issue of importance and great concern. In fact, we've recently reintroduced legislation that, if passed, will actually address the specific issue that the member opposite has spoken to.

I also expect, Mr. Speaker, for CCACs to recognize that they are spending taxpayer dollars and they need to spend those dollars effectively and efficiently, and that includes issues concerning compensation.

In fact, in terms of looking at our CCACs, I've struck a table to look at home and community care. I expect that, early in the new year, I'm going to have the results and recommendations coming back from that table, to provide further guidance on how to approach this important sector.



## PRIVATE CLINICS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

People in Ontario expect their health care system to help them, not to make them sick, but this government's risky experiment in offloading surgery to private clinics has failed to live up to that standard.

Patients like Anne Levac and Tracey Martin have contracted life-threatening infections at unsafe private clinics, while Ontarians were left in the dark about those infectious outbreaks.

Now, more alarm bells are ringing, because fully one in seven private clinics is failing to comply with safety standards—one in seven. This is completely unacceptable.

How can the minister allow more private clinics to set up shop when so many of them are putting patients' health care in danger?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. My top job is to ensure the protection and the safety and health and well-being of Ontarians. That is a job and a responsibility that I take extremely seriously.

To that end, it's important that Ontarians not only have the confidence they need in all elements of our health care system, but that they also have the information required to make those informed decisions.

When this issue first came up several weeks ago, in fact, I asked for all regulatory colleges, many of which—the CPSO, for example, is the one that currently has oversight over independent health facilities. I've asked all of the regulatory colleges to report back to me on measures that they're going to put in place in terms of increasing transparency and accountability of the services of those entities that they have oversight of. Specifically, I've asked that transparency become a priority objective in each of their business plans, and I've asked them to disclose more information. In fact, I've also asked Health Quality Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The facts are that 44 clinics have fallen short of basic standards in the last three years, but under this Liberal government, patient safety takes a back seat to full-throttle expansions of private clinics.

The number of private clinics has skyrocketed—a 31% increase in the last three years, even though Ontario does not presently have the layers of oversight, transparency and reporting needed to safeguard the public and even though at least 20 patients have contracted serious infections at these clinics.

It's time to put a stop to this Liberal failed experiment and put Ontarians' safety first. Will the minister agree to immediately declare a moratorium on new private clinics in Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** In addition to asking our colleges—those that have inspection programs—to proactively and publicly disclose full detailed, useful information with respect to each of the inspections that they

conduct, I've also asked Health Quality Ontario to do a review of our independent health facilities and how we can actually further establish a mechanism of accountability to give confidence to Ontarians on the issue that the member opposite has just mentioned.

I know that the opposition agrees with my approach because, several weeks ago, the member opposite called these actions the government is taking a "huge, huge victory." She also stated she is very "happy with the step that he"—meaning myself—"has taken."

With this letter addressed to all of the colleges, I expect movement.

## CARBON MONOXIDE

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** My question is for the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

My riding of Halton is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, and we have a lot of young families living in the region. Keeping Halton residents safe is something that is very important to me.

Lately, the people of my community and people in communities across the province are concerned about the threat of carbon monoxide gas. Carbon monoxide is a threat to our families and loved ones because it is odorless and colourless and is a silent killer. More than 50 people die in Canada from carbon monoxide poisoning each year. On average, 11 of those are in Ontario. But the real tragedy is that each and every one of these deaths is preventable.

As the minister charged with the safety and security of Ontarians, finding this silent killer is part of your responsibility. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you please tell us what steps you have taken to help protect our friends and our families from the threat of carbon monoxide?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member from Halton for raising such an important issue and asking this question today.

As the member mentioned, carbon monoxide gas is a silent killer that continues to claim too many lives in our province. That is why our government is very much committed to working with all MPPs, stakeholders and partners to ensure that no more Ontarians lose their lives to carbon monoxide poisoning.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work done by the MPP from Oxford in bringing forward his Bill 77, which was passed unanimously in this Legislature. That bill came into effect on October 15, making it mandatory for all homes in Ontario to have carbon monoxide alarms.

Installing a carbon monoxide detector in your home is perhaps one of the simplest and most effective ways to alert you and your family to the presence of this lethal gas. I encourage everybody to do so.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you, Minister, for your action on this important issue. I would also like to

acknowledge the efforts of the member from Oxford on this.

I am certain that making CO alarms mandatory in homes will help save lives in my community and across Ontario. In fact, just recently the Milton Fire Department received a donation from Union Gas to help buy smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors for families who don't have the equipment already.

The work of our government in protecting Ontarians is never complete, and there is always more action to be taken. Minister, my community and all Ontarians need more information about your action on this issue beyond this legislation. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you please provide more details on how you plan to protect Ontarians from the dangers of carbon monoxide?

1120

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** The law requires that carbon monoxide alarms be installed in the service rooms and near all sleeping areas in multi-residential buildings. It also introduces annual testing, battery replacement and other requirements to ensure that carbon monoxide alarms in these residences are in good working order.

But Speaker, introducing new rules is just not enough. We need to ensure that each and every Ontarian understands the importance of having a working carbon monoxide alarm in their home. That's why this week is the first-ever Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week in our history as a result of the legislation that was put forward by the MPP from Oxford.

We need to take this week, and every single day, as an opportunity to spread the word about the dangers of carbon monoxide and the necessity of a detector in our home. I encourage each and every member here today and, through the members, their constituents, in encouraging members of our community to purchase a carbon monoxide alarm and install it in their homes today.

## PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

Minister, six weeks ago you sat in the estimates committee and said this about Tim Hortons stadium in Hamilton: "This is eight or nine months prior to the games and it's operational." But Tim Hortons stadium in Hamilton had to miss a Pan Am test event just this past weekend—it was the university women's soccer championship—because the venue still isn't ready. We're hearing now it may be ready for the Ticats's final home game, a full two months after the Labour Day drop-dead date.

Minister, since this project has never been on time, how about some accountability from that side of the House? Who's being held responsible for yet another deadline missed at Tim Hortons stadium in Hamilton?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to start by saying that the changes to the construction timeline will not have any effect on the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games next year in Hamilton in 2015.

I'd like to remind the member opposite that through our investment, the city of Hamilton is receiving a brand new 22,000-seat stadium. This is a \$146-million investment, and we're happy in this House to be part of that initiative to leverage these games in order to build a strong stadium, strong support in the city of Hamilton.

The Tiger-Cats have actually played, I believe, seven games there, and they're currently undefeated. I want to congratulate the Tiger-Cats and the people of Hamilton for the great work.

Mr. Speaker, I have a bit more to talk about on the infrastructure in the supplemental.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** The fact of the matter is, the minister has said the venue would be ready, and clearly, the venue is not ready. They've had to move events from there time and time again, and no one has been held accountable on that side of the House.

The list of problems at Tim Hortons stadium includes electrical work, elevators, landscaping and the press box. It goes on and on. There's all kinds of—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please finish.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you.

Let's move on from Tim Hortons stadium in Hamilton. Let's move on to the velodrome in Milton, because it's not ready either. It had test functions that were cancelled earlier this fall as well. They were supposed to have an event there, and it's behind schedule too.

Minister, you've repeatedly told us the venues will be on time and on budget. Nobody believes that anymore. Now they're missing events that are actually in those schedules that you've been talking about. Who, ultimately, is going to be held responsible?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Thank you for the question. I want to thank the people of Hamilton for their support for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. In fact, this morning I found out that out of all of Ontario, Hamilton is volunteering the most people for the Pan Am Games, with 2,200 people who have signed up from Hamilton.

I want to thank the people of Hamilton for their investment in these games. They're excited about a \$146-million investment, they're excited for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games and they're excited because their team is currently undefeated in that new stadium.

## FOREST INDUSTRY

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** To the Premier: Fort Frances was devastated when their local mill idled in 2012. Now there is renewed hope, given that a company is looking to purchase the mill. Getting the mill up and running could mean 200 direct and 1,000 spinoff jobs, as well as a \$100-million annual injection into the economy.

But Expera, the company ready to buy the mill and create jobs, keeps running up against major challenges that the town of Fort Frances is confident this government can solve.



In a recent letter to the town of Fort Frances, the Premier wrote that she recognizes “the benefits that such a deal could bring” and that her government is “committed to the forestry industry, and to preserving and creating jobs in northern Ontario.”

My question is, what is the Premier ready to do to help the town of Fort Frances and ensure that we can get this mill up and going?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member for the question. Like many in northwestern Ontario, I will say I was very excited when the negotiations began between the owner of the mill and the potential purchaser of the mill. I would say that I allowed myself to get a little bit more optimistic than I might generally in situations like this. We need to remember that the mill is a privately owned facility.

There are multiple components as to whether or not a deal could get done. At the end of the day, at least to this point—and we’re still hopeful that things can get back on track and restart—the two parties have decided that they are not going to move forward with the mill, or to the negotiation and the sale.

I would say, though, to the town of Fort Frances—and I did call Mayor Avis immediately upon finding out about this; I had a great conversation with him. We do understand that Mayor Avis and the town of Fort Frances will continue to work towards a deal and do anything they can, and we’re there to support them very much in that effort in any way that we can.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Back to the Premier: The Crossroute Forest is one of the most productive forests in Ontario, but the forest is in the hands of a company that won’t guarantee the prospective buyer, Expera, the cost-competitive fibre it needs to run the mill.

The town of Fort Frances has asked for a seat at the table to ensure that its local forests can create jobs in Fort Frances as part of an enhanced sustainable forestry licence. But the minister has slammed the door. With the stroke of a pen, this government can ensure that Fort Frances has a role in managing its own forests so that there is enough fibre to keep people working.

Will the Premier listen to the town of Fort Frances and First Nation communities and instruct her Minister of Natural Resources to approve the enhanced sustainable forestry licence for the town of Fort Frances?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I think it’s important to note that the system of forest tenure that we’re operating under currently now in the province of Ontario was a system that was brought in by NDP in 1994. We’ve made a significant commitment to move away from that system with tenure modernization.

There are four priority ESFLs in the province of Ontario currently being worked on right now. But it’s important, Speaker, to say that even if there was tenure modernization in place, even if there was an ESFL in this

particular case, it’s only one piece of the components necessary to get a deal done.

At the end of the day, the mill is still privately owned; it’s not in bankruptcy. So at the end of the day, even if the ESFL discussions had begun some time ago, that is in no way a guarantee that a deal could have been done here.

I will say, Speaker, we’re interested in working with the town in any way we can. We understand the impact of this mill to that community and all of northwestern Ontario. We’ll continue to do whatever we can to try to enhance the opportunities around—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question?

## CHILD CARE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is for the Minister of Education. Minister, the Ombudsman, in his scathing report, says there are 800,000 children in independent child care in Ontario up to the age of 12. The Ministry of Education reports they have 292,000 licensed spots in Ontario covering children up to 12 years of age as well. These spots are full, and tens of thousands of children are on subsidized wait-lists.

According to a survey by the Child Care Providers Resource Network, 40% of independent child care providers will close their doors if Bill 10 passes with the proposed ratio restrictions. That is 320,000 spaces, Minister. The bill is an even bigger disaster than when we originally calculated it.

Minister, are you really going to push this disastrous bill through this House without proper consultation across this province?

1130

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I think I need to comment on the selective use of the Ombudsman because, if you look at the breadth of the Ombudsman’s report, what he’s saying is that we need to make changes to the way child care supervision works in Ontario and we need to make it quickly. In fact, what we need to do is make sure that our inspectors actually have the authority that, when people break the rules, they have the authority to fine and, in particular, that they have the authority to close those child carers down.

Yes, we do think—we agree with the Ombudsman—that it is urgent that we pass Bill 10 and implement his recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman clearly, clearly indicated that this Ministry of Education did not do its job.

Minister, the average cost of licensed care is \$140 per month more for independent child care providers than for licensed ones. With the loss of a possible 320,000 spaces, that will cost young families in Ontario an average of \$44.8 million more per month—that’s per month. That’s if there was even a remote chance of a licensed daycare spot that you brag about, and it’s not including the loss of income for roughly 60,000 independent child care pro-

viders who don't mind being regulated or licensed, or have a registry.

If I'm wrong on these numbers, can you enlighten this House with the numbers that you actually have and that you're going to pass this bill on? That's what I'd like to see, the real true numbers given to this House and not passed through some fast committee that's going to be time-allocated and really dumped on all the young people and all the people who are trying—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I believe that if you read the Ombudsman's report carefully, what you would find is that he said that there are over 800,000 children who are either not in licensed care or not in the care of their mothers. Included in that 800,000 are the people who don't have child care at all: so all those 11- and 12-year-olds who are home alone, all those kids who go to grandma's house, all those kids who have a nanny, all those kids who have a babysitter. So, in fact, the number that you're using to do your calculations on, which is 800,000 kids in unlicensed child care, is factually incorrect. Your calculations don't work.

But let's go back to the real issue here, Speaker. The real issue is that, regardless of whether children are in a licensed centre, licensed home care or unlicensed home care, it is our responsibility as a government to keep kids safe. That's what—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** Speaker, through you to the Premier: In my riding of Sudbury, Lasalle Boulevard is a commercial main street used by residents, but it's also the only direct route available for the heavy slurry trucks travelling between the source and the smelter at Falconbridge. The extension of Maley Drive would provide these massive, massive trucks an alternative route, heeding road user safety and taking into account the maintenance of road infrastructure.

The city has attempted to get the federal and provincial governments to pay one third of the project costs. During the election campaign, your government promised \$26.7 million for this project, but this is not even one third of the \$120-million projected cost of the Maley Drive extension. Premier, through you, Speaker: Will your government commit to funding the full one-third total cost of the Maley Drive extension?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of economic development, trade and employment and infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We're working on that, Mr. Speaker; thank you, though.

I appreciate the question. I know this is an issue that the city of Sudbury has identified as a priority. We're going to continue to work with municipalities on their

priorities. We understand the significance of this. It's a fairly significant ask, but we have a number of programs now that we've rolled out with municipalities.

The key is, Mr. Speaker, that we're rolling out these programs, as you would know from our AMO commitment, on the basis of the way municipalities want us to deal with these programs. In other words, we're looking at half of the programs being a formula-based approach and the other half, as we get up in asset management issues, being the other kind of traditional approach. We're going to continue to work with the city of Sudbury and other municipalities to ensure that their needs are met.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** Thank you, Speaker, and through you, you're right, Minister: The project has been very important to the city of Greater Sudbury for over 20 years and as well to my colleague from Nickel Belt.

Minister, during the election your government promised the people of Sudbury the money was available for the Maley Drive extension, but no money has actually been set aside. The funds your government speaks of are conditional on matching federal funding. If the federal government doesn't pay its share, the province will pay nothing either. Will your government commit to funding the Maley Drive extension unconditional of federal government funding and come through for the people of Greater Sudbury?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member is correct. I mean, the commitment that we made in the 2014 budget was conditional on federal funding and the federal government has got to do their share. The fact of the matter is that when you look at the infrastructure investments we're making—\$130 billion over 10 years—the federal government's commitment across the country, not just in Ontario, and including investments in their own buildings, is \$70 billion. That's a far cry from where their investments should be.

So, yes, we'll be calling on the federal government to pay their share when it comes to projects like this and projects right across the province, whether that's transit, roads, bridges or water and wastewater projects. We need a federal government in this country that's committed to building infrastructure. We don't have that right now.

## HEALTHY LIVING

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. I was very pleased last week to hear from the minister that his ministry is promoting sports, recreation and active living in priority neighbourhoods. The minister announced continued support for the after-school program, the program that helps children and youth to remain active, develop healthy and active living, gain confidence and achieve more in school.

Given the current statistics on childhood obesity and as a former member of the Healthy Kids Panel, I believe the recent announcement by the minister of investing



\$13.5 million supports many of the recommendations by the Healthy Kids Panel.

I'm also very pleased that we're partnering with over 130 organizations, including, in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, Agincourt community social services. These organizations will deliver the after-school program to over 400 locations.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please share with the members of the House on the expanded after-school program and how it will help kids in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough-Agincourt for her work on promoting healthy choices not only in the Legislature here but as a nurse and as a former school board trustee of the Toronto District School Board.

Her question gives me an opportunity to talk about this incredible program. My ministry announced last week that we'll be investing \$13.5 million into the after-school program. This program will support children and youth who will be making healthy choices through positive activities.

I'd like to thank the service providers who helped deliver this program to over 400 locations across this province, and that includes over 21,000 young people who actively participate in these programs. Program activities include sports, arts and crafts, personal health and wellness education, and nutrition instruction. They are delivered by non-profit organizations throughout the province. We're very proud of the work that these organizations do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you, Speaker. I thank the minister as well for his comments about this fantastic program.

I know, as a former school board trustee, the importance of these programs to reaching out to students after school but also during the school time. I heard that the after-school program is incorporating the Pan Am Games as well as the Kids 'n Play resource on the ppakids website.

I'm happy that the program will allow kids to learn about the games next summer through interactive activities like the Who is Pachi? activity to learn about the mascot of the games, identifying the flags of participating countries, as well as the creating-your-own Pan Am flag activity.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please share with the House some other plans for this after-school program, but also how to keep our kids healthy and active?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Again, I'd like to thank the member for the question. We've been funding this program, the after-school program, since 2009. We're quite proud of the investment we've been able to do. We know that when young people go to these programs they have a safe place to learn together, do their homework, to learn about great nutritional food and great nutritional food

choices, to take part in physical activity, but most importantly to have some fun.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe North on a point of order.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yes, please. My colleagues have told me I said this wrong, but I want to correct myself on the supplementary to the minister. What I meant to say was, the average cost of licensed care is \$140 per month per child more than independent child care providers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As all members know, that is a point of order, to correct one's record. I thank the member for bringing it forward properly.

## WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on a point of order.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Better late than never: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear Ontario Lung Association pins today in recognition of Lung Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbon. Do we agree? Agreed.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Associate Minister of Finance on a point of order.

**Hon. Mitzi Hunter:** I'd like to welcome to this House Joe Baker, dean, as well as Michelle Caine, chair, of the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts at Centennial College; as well as students from Willow Park Junior Public School who are touring the House today.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton on a point of order.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** In my question, I mentioned that the members for Durham, Scarborough Southwest, Mississauga-Streetsville, Halton and Beaches-East York voted on Friday. I'd like to correct that to say "Thursday." It was actually Thursday that that happened.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Again, correcting the record is a point of order.

There are no further points of order and there are no deferred votes. This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise to welcome a number of people who are here today in recognition of Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week. In the gallery are John Gignac, founder of the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education; Pat Folliott and Mary Ellen Sheppard, who have worked hard to raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide; and Doug DeRabbie and Matt Hiraishi from the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

I also want to recognize Matthew Stanton, an intern with the Ontario Legislative Internship Program, who has started his employment in our office this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome. Further introductions? Last call for introductions.

My editorial would be that Mr. Gignac is a constituent of mine in the riding of Brant. We're glad you're here, John. Thank you.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ARTHUR MURAL

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** On October 25, I had the privilege of attending the dedication of a new mural at the Arthur cenotaph. The mural recognizes the service of veterans and soldiers who have protected, and who are protecting, our freedom.

I would like to recognize and thank all those who have been involved in the mural project, including the muralist, Cliff Smith; the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 226 in Arthur; the Arthur and Area Historical Society; the township of Wellington North; and all of the dedicated volunteers.

Arthur is proudly known as the most patriotic village in Canada, and for good reason: One out of every seven Arthur residents fought in the Second World War. The cenotaph honours the sacrifice of these soldiers, along with those who fought in the First World War.

As the new mural reads: "Remember ... Freedom isn't Free." We are reminded of that as we approach Remembrance Day—one, I'm sure, that will be particularly significant for all Canadians this year.

In Perth-Wellington there will be 10 Remembrance Day ceremonies hosted by our local Royal Canadian Legions. Today I recognize the legion members and volunteers who are organizing ceremonies in Milverton, St. Marys, Atwood, Clifford, Stratford, Mount Forest, Arthur, Palmerston, Harriston, Drayton and Aboyne. I'm hoping to attend as many of your services as I can.

I would encourage everyone to participate in the poppy campaign and attend a Remembrance Day ceremony this year to pay tribute to our heroes.

### ABITIBI TRETTLE BRIDGE

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The Trestle bridge near Iroquois Falls was built in 1922 to cross the mighty Abitibi River,

which separated the Abitibi pulp and paper mill from the forests that were needed to supply it. Although originally a railway bridge, it was converted to vehicle traffic in the 1950s. Over the years, it's become an iconic part of the region and a gateway for residents of the area to enjoy the forests and lakes beyond its span. Hunters, campers and fishermen from all over North America use that bridge as their access point.

On August 10, 2014, Resolute Forest Products closed the bridge because an inspection revealed safety concerns. People of the area were devastated; 1,000 came on the last day to say goodbye, hopefully not for the last time.

A committee has been struck to look at options for opening this vital link. Gilles Forget, the mayor at the time, took the lead, and I'm sure that now that he's retired from his municipal duties, he will continue to pursue all avenues available.

H2O Power, Resolute and the other stakeholders have been actively looking at possible solutions. The Ministry of Transportation sent a team to do their own inspection of the bridge, and we look forward to the results of that work. The Trestle bridge is an integral part of the culture and economy of Iroquois Falls, and I encourage the government to work with Gilles, incoming Mayor Michael Shea and the rest of the townspeople so that they can once again access their own backyard.

We don't have the Blue Jays; we might not even want the Leafs. But we have the Abitibi Eskimos, and we need our Trestle back.

### NIRVANA CULTURAL SOCIETY

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** It's a pleasure to rise today and speak about a very special Diwali celebration that I recently attended. This past Sunday I took part in the 40th annual Diwali gala dinner with the Nirvana Cultural Society. It all started 40 years ago when a group of remarkable individuals, people who refused to be defined by apartheid and the labels attached to them by the old South Africa, chose hope and the path forward in a new country.

Ontario's South African community is a strong community with strong values and a strong bond. They have seen what oppression looks like, tasted its reality and fought it with all their might.

Many of the people in the room celebrating the Hindu festival of Diwali had made a difficult choice during their lives. They chose to leave family, friends and a life of oppression and instead head for hope, freedom and respect in Ontario and Canada. From the very beginning, this group felt it had a responsibility to give back to their new country.

For the past 40 years, this group has been fundraising money for various charities through this event, including the Stephen Lewis AIDS fund, the Princess Margaret cancer fund, the aboriginal children's literacy program, and the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, to name a few.

It's a wonderful evening filled with culture, friendship and tradition. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to acknow-



ledge the Nirvana Cultural Society today for once again organizing a terrific Diwali event and for celebrating 40 years of freedom in the place they now call home.

### CARBON MONOXIDE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize Ontario's first Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, and, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your work on this issue.

Six years ago, the Hawkins family in Woodstock were tragically lost to carbon monoxide poisoning due to a blocked vent in their fireplace. Since then, many people have worked to avoid more tragedies. I want to commend John Gignac, Laurie Hawkins's uncle, who founded the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education and shared his family's story to help save others. He has become an advocate for detectors not only here in Ontario, but across Canada.

I also want to recognize the Insurance Bureau of Canada. They have worked with me to raise awareness and donated over 2,000 carbon monoxide detectors to Ontario fire departments. Those will be given to the needy.

Last year, this Legislature passed my private member's bill the Hawkins Gignac Act so all homes in Ontario with a fuel-burning appliance or attached garage are required to have a carbon monoxide detector. You can't see, smell or taste carbon monoxide, so the only way to know your family is safe is to have a detector.

The bill also created Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, starting November 1 every year, to remind people about the danger. This week, we want to remind everyone to check and make sure their vents and chimneys aren't blocked, to get fuel-burning appliances serviced regularly, and, most importantly, to make sure that you have a working carbon monoxide detector in your home.

### GASOLINE PRICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to share with you a few gas prices from north of Toronto. Today the gas in Barrie is at \$1.13 a litre. It's \$1.24 in North Bay, \$1.25 in Sudbury and \$1.18 in Sturgeon Falls.

Right now, my constituents in Nickel Belt are paying seven cents more—sometimes it is up to 10 cents more—than the people in Sturgeon Falls. There is only one road to Sturgeon Falls, Speaker; it either comes from North Bay or from Sudbury. So the delivery cost is not the issue. They have fewer gas stations, fewer people, fewer industries. It defies the laws of economics, Speaker. Back home we call it gouging.

Ontario should enact price controls for gas to protect us from gouging. Most provinces to the east of us, and some American states, have price-control mechanisms. Studies have shown that jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild fluctuations, a shrinking of the price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices.

This is the kind of legislation the people of this province need, especially northern and rural citizens with no public transit. I think the time has come for this government to do more to protect its citizens' pocketbooks and regulate the price of gas.

### CENTRE FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** As a former nurse, I am very pleased to rise today to congratulate both the Scarborough Hospital and the University of Toronto for their partnership in opening the Centre for Integrative Medicine in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt.

Some 74% of Canadians, including many of my constituents, receive complementary and alternative medicine as a part of their health regimen. This includes the use of natural products, chiropractic care, acupuncture and meditation, to name just a few.

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I'm proud to say that the new Centre for Integrative Medicine is the first of its kind in Canada and will examine how these treatments interact with conventional medicine. This centre will have a research and a clinical component. Researchers will collaborate with multidiscipline health practitioners to lay a foundation for a future clinical hub that will specialize in disease prevention and health promotion.

I want to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the creation of the Centre for Integrative Medicine: from the Scarborough Hospital, president and CEO Robert Biron, Marla Fryers, Ethel Doyle and Dr. Paul Tam; from the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine, Dean Heather Boon and Dean Catharine Whiteside; from the Centre for Integrative Medicine, Professor Linda Balneaves and Maurine Kwok; and donors, K.Y. and Betty Ho.

### ST. THOMAS TOMCATS

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I don't think you're going to like this statement; however, I hope you will at the end.

While most of us are talking about hockey and curling, I'm going to remind us about the past baseball season throughout Ontario. I'd like to congratulate the St. Thomas Tomcats on not only winning their fourth consecutive inter-county junior baseball league pennant; they were the playoff champions. How did this occur? Well, this win took place in Brantford on August 14 with a 2-1 win in game 1 and an 8-4 win in game 2, which led the Tomcats to victory.

That night, Tyler Gillies, the pitcher, struck out the side in the second inning, mowing down three of Brantford's top hitters. He was nearly flawless from there, allowing only one hit and three base runners and grabbing 12 more straight strikeouts to close the game. The catcher, Sean Refflinghaus, and the pitcher were in sync all night.

I would like to congratulate the head coach, Matt Gooding, as well as coaches Ben Crossett, Jim Ewart, Jacques Roy and Martin Warner for their hard work and dedication all season. I'd also like to extend my congratulations to each and every one of those players—a hard-fought season, a hard-fought win over Brantford. St. Thomas is proud of you. Enjoy it, and we look forward to doing it again next year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You know I want to say something. Pass.

### CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** Last week there was a serious incident of vandalism that took place at the Dar As Sunnah mosque in Ottawa South. The violence that we witnessed in Ottawa in recent weeks and the vandalism that took place at the mosque have no place in our community. Targeting people because of their values, their beliefs or the colour of their skin is wrong. People from around the world have made Ottawa South a place to raise their family. In fact, there are over 80 languages spoken in our schools. We are a model for the world.

In the last few weeks, we saw our community come together in our churches, our mosques, our synagogues, our temples and our community spaces to pray for and support those who were victims of the violence that took place in downtown Ottawa. In times such as these, it is important to remember that we are all in this together. We live in a beautiful, peaceful and welcoming community, and the actions of a few do not reflect the strength of our community as a whole.

In Ottawa South we are one, and we will continue to work together to keep our community safe, peaceful and welcoming.

### NATIONAL CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS DAY

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Good afternoon, Speaker. On Saturday evening, I had the opportunity to stand in for recently re-elected Barrie Mayor Jeff Lehman—he only got 92% of the vote. I was able to proclaim November 20, 2014, National Children's Grief Awareness Day. I was honoured to do so for two organizations that offer very valuable services to our community.

Seasons Centre for Grieving Children is a registered charitable organization for children who experience grief caused by the death of a parent or sibling or for children who have an immediate family member diagnosed with a terminal illness. They have been doing this since 1995. In the classrooms, my colleagues and I have noticed what a difference it makes to the children they deal with.

The other group is Rainbows for All Children Canada. It has partnered with children's grief awareness day to recognize children who are struggling from loss.

November 20, National Children's Grief Awareness Day, is an opportunity to let grieving children know they're not forgotten in the midst of their grief. Join us by

wearing blue on Thursday, November 20, 2014, as we come together to show our support of these children.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### 752458 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2014

Mr. Singh moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr10, An Act to revive 752458 Ontario Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulation and Private bills.

### PETITIONS

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I fully agree with this, will affix my name and send it with page Renée.

#### HIGH PARK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas High Park was donated to the city with conditions that it be free to use and for the benefit of all the citizens of Toronto and Ontario in perpetuity;



"Whereas development should be considered in the context of protecting High Park's ecosystems from negative impacts;

"Whereas many people who travel from around the world are able to experience through High Park a unique, peaceful aspect of the city of Toronto, often referred to as the "jewel" of Toronto;

"Whereas the OMB has proven ill-equipped to the task of protecting this precious resource;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Environment take the adequate steps necessary to protect this environmentally and historically significant park and its boundary areas."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign this, and I'm going to give it to Félix to be delivered to the table.

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I fully support the petition and I'll give my petition to page Callum.

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### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government introduced Bill 10—Child Care Modernization Act on July 10, 2014;

"Whereas the passage of the bill will result in the elimination of 140,000 child care spaces in Ontario and increase child care costs by 30-40%, especially in rural and suburban areas;

"Whereas Bill 10 could force licensed daycare providers to close, impacting religious day schools, private schools and Montessori schools as well;

"Whereas the Liberal government has asked for quick passage of the bill but has not properly considered these repercussions for all Ontario parents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government conduct province-wide consultation during the 2014-2015 legislative winter recess at which time the Minister of Education will travel across the province to Hamilton, Guelph, Ottawa, Kitchener, London, Windsor, Sudbury and Toronto to consult with parents and child care workers to understand how the bill will negatively affect Ontario children, parents and child care workers."

I'm pleased to affix my signature and send the petition to the table with page Josée.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

"Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

"Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

"Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding."

I couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to page Adam to bring to the Clerk.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

"Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

"Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

"Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario's health care sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman."

I agree with this and will affix my signature and give it to page Katie.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of Ontario, mayors and councillors from more than 80 municipalities and Ontario's largest farm organizations and rural stakeholders, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, seek an immediate moratorium on wind development projects awaiting approval until an independent and comprehensive health study has determined that turbine noise is safe to human health; and

"Whereas the provincial Liberal government's study back in 2011 failed to conclude anything more than it needed to continue to study the turbine sound impacts; and

"Whereas the federal government is launching, through Health Canada, the first comprehensive study of health impacts of wind turbines;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government follow the federal lead, accept the objective of the federal wind study, agree and accept that until the study is finished it will not approve any new wind turbine projects in Ontario, effective immediately."

I support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Callum. Thank you.

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

"(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

"(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario."

I strongly support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Adam to take to the table.

### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Morgan.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas collecting and restoring old vehicles honours Ontario's automotive heritage while contributing to the economy through the purchase of goods and services, tourism, and support for special events; and

"Whereas the stringent application of emissions regulations for older cars equipped with newer engines can result in fines and additional expenses that discourage car collectors and restorers from pursuing their hobby; and

"Whereas newer engines installed by hobbyists in vehicles over 20 years old provide cleaner emissions than the original equipment; and

"Whereas car collectors typically use their vehicles only on an occasional basis, during four to five months of the year;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians who collect and restore old vehicles by amending the appropriate laws and regulations to ensure vehicles over 20 years old and exempt from Drive Clean testing shall also be exempt from additional emissions requirements enforced by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks."

I am pleased to affix my signature, Speaker. I'll send the petition to the table with page Renée.

### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have these petitions that were collected by Keshia Ives Jarrett from Toronto, and it reads as follows:



"Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect, and substandard care for patients at our hospitals and long-term-care homes;

"Whereas there are more and more cases of hospital acquired infections;

"Whereas people with complaints have no independent body to listen to their concerns;

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of hospitals and other front line care organizations;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman's mandate to include Ontario's hospitals, long-term-care homes and other front line care organizations."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Jagmeet to bring it to the Clerk.

#### LEGAL AID

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

#### RURAL AND NORTHERN ONTARIO TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the loss of transportation service will further destabilize rural economies and impede on residents' ability to get to school, work, doctor or hospital appointments, or any other service unavailable locally;

"Whereas the prosperity, productivity and participation of all segments of society depends on a viable, accessible transportation network;

"Whereas the lack of a transportation service negatively impacts those people with special needs, accessibility challenges, seniors and those living below the poverty level;

"Whereas Greyhound Canada plans to cut bus service and Via Rail plans to cut train service in rural Ontario;

"Whereas there is no secondary carrier serving rural Ontario's students, workers, volunteers, tourists, business travellers and any resident without a driver's licence;

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"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately strike an all-party committee at Queen's Park to study transportation needs in rural and northern Ontario."

I fully support this, will affix my name and send it with page Félix.

#### OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads 'that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles';

"Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

"Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately."

I fully support this petition and present it to page Faith from Algoma-Manitoulin to bring down to the Clerks.

#### LEGAL AID

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I sign the petition and send it to the desk with Noah.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have available this afternoon for petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 30, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When this House last debated Bill 10, we had completed questions and comments related to the remarks by the member for Scarborough–Agincourt, so I will call for further debate and recognize the member for Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak on Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts. I should say at the outset that I will be sharing my time with my colleague the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

I was eager to speak on Bill 10 because it's an issue of major concern to the people in my riding of Leeds–Grenville. We know that the viability of the child care system in rural parts of Ontario like Leeds–Grenville would be at risk if we allowed Bill 10 to go through as it is, so I wanted to have the opportunity to stand here, on behalf of parents and child care providers I represent, to bring their views to the floor of the Legislature in this very important debate. I wanted to do so before the government inevitably moves to cut debate off on Bill 10, as they have done with other pieces of legislation since we came back here in the chamber.

Off the top, I want to commend our PC education critic, the member for Simcoe North, Mr. Garfield Dunlop. He has done an outstanding job outlining the very serious concerns with aspects of Bill 10. It's important for government members who are here today to listen to the

debate from our side and understand where our concerns are coming from. Our critic has worked tirelessly to go out and meet with stakeholders, particularly those private daycare operators who have been, I suggest, completely ignored by the government. That's who the member for Simcoe North is. When he was our critic for skilled trades, he came to Leeds–Grenville and met with dozens of tradesmen in my riding to hear their concerns about the College of Trades. I suggest he has taken the same approach with this particular piece of legislation. From what he has heard, very clearly, Bill 10 is going to have an absolutely catastrophic result for those that are private operators and for the ability of parents to choose the care that's best for them.

I've heard the minister and other members describing what we're saying as fear mongering by the opposition. Of course that's what they're going to say, Speaker, because the government knows they can't argue with the facts. So we're left to choose between our critic, who has tirelessly toured the province and listened to those affected by Bill 10, or the minister's empty promises that everything is going to be all right. Well, it's a pretty easy choice for me. I'm going to look at the debate from Mr. Dunlop's perspective, and I'm going to keep an open mind to some of the other members.

But it's a very complex piece of legislation. In fact, it amends more than a dozen other acts: everything from the Assessment Act and the Income Tax Act to the Pay Equity Act and even the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. We also need to recognize the incredible number of people who are going to be affected by Bill 10. Our estimate puts the number at about 70,000 child care providers and approximately 350,000 children in care and their parents.

The reality is, if the bill passes as it is written now, we're going to see parents lose child care options. Our estimate is that this legislation will eliminate 140,000 child care spaces in Ontario, many of them in rural parts of the province, like my riding. That's because we will see child care providers forced out of business. We will see parents facing an increase of 30% to 40% in daycare fees to make up for the shortfall of income to providers. As I said earlier, the parts of Ontario that stand to lose most because of this piece of legislation are rural areas.

It's for that reason that I and my colleagues and my caucus, for that matter, are calling for province-wide hearings on Bill 10. We need an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly to do what Mr. Dunlop does in his role of critic, and that's go out to other parts of Ontario and hold meetings and listen to people. We need to hear from parents and child care providers in the north, in southwestern Ontario, in central Ontario, in eastern Ontario. The government needs to understand that Ontario exists outside of the GTA. The families and the hard-working independent daycare operators out there face dire consequences as a result of this government's desire to create a one-size-fits-all system of child care.

I know the minister is eager to get Bill 10 rammed down our throats because of the Ombudsman's report, which basically shone a light on this government's ter-



rible record on this file. You don't make up for 12 years of—and I'll use the Ombudsman's words—"systematic government ineptitude" by rushing in legislation without fully examining its consequences. I would think a Minister of Education of all people knows that old proverb: "Two wrongs don't make a right." That's exactly what she's doing with Bill 10.

It's a bill in need of serious revision, because what we have in it now won't improve the safety of children in care; it will actually see us spending more on child care and providing less of it. That's why our caucus is saying that we need to take a step back. We need to use the winter break as an opportunity to go out across the province and hear directly from those who will be most affected by the bill. It's a very complex bill, and we can't just have hearings here in Toronto; we need to go closer to these men and women who are providing this care.

I know I only have a few moments, so I wanted to put on the record some of the comments of one of the independent child care providers in my riding who's deeply concerned about this legislation. Cynthia Potschka operates a wonderful home daycare called the Cherished Cherubs Child Care in North Grenville. This is a bit of background about Cynthia from a letter she wrote to me:

"I have worked in the child care industry for a good portion of the last 20 years. I currently provide a very professional child care program from my home that is highly regarded by parents and those who work in the child care field.

"I choose to provide care from my home for a number of reasons, but one of the most important reasons is because my own experience with child care centres as a parent, ECE student and supply teacher led me to the conclusion that the type of care that is provided in a quality home child care environment is beyond compare.

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"And I wanted to be the person providing excellent care to children and their families—not just meeting a minimum standard."

That sets the scene about who Cynthia Potschka is, what kind of child care specialist she is, and what kind of service she provides parents in her riding. She's an experienced, qualified, caring provider who gives parents in a rural area an option to choose an outstanding home child care setting for their kids.

Here's what her assessment of Bill 10 is and what it will do for her business: "It will likely force caregivers, like myself, to shut our doors. It is doubtful that I would be able to continue to operate my program the way I do ... when faced with the financial costs of this legislation."

She notes that neither the restriction limiting her two children under two years of age or contracting with a home daycare licensing agency—and turning over 30% of her income, essentially—is viable.

Here's another quote, Mr. Speaker: "In order to remain open, I will have to consider an increase to my fees to a level which many families will find impossible. I would like to be in the business of caring for children

for many more years to come, but it's clear to me that the implementation of this bill will make this an unlikely long-term option."

She sums it up. Her words that she hopes the minister will heed: "It's a poor piece of legislation that does not address the real child care issues in our community today. It is a piece of legislation that will, by its very nature, create a shortage of child care spaces, remove choices from families who need care, fees will increase and become unreachable, and quality will decline.

"The circumstances of children in care will be worse, not better. Families will be under more pressure, not less. This is not the legislation that is needed to modernize child care in Ontario."

I could go on and on with Cynthia's letter to me. I've received many other letters from other providers. Everyone is of the same mind, at least in my riding, whether they live in North Grenville, Westport, Athens or any of the other rural areas in my riding. I think they need to realize that we can't rush down the path that the minister has put us on with Bill 10.

We need to take a step back. We need to have some meaningful hearings across the province. We need to listen to people on what they would like to see in this bill, and we cannot allow the government House leader to ram this bill down our throats when we have so many Ontarians asking us to hold province-wide hearings and come up with a bill that gets it right.

I've used up my time. I know that the member for Kitchener—Conestoga is very eager to get his comments on the record. Thank you for allowing me to speak, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** The member for Leeds—Grenville is correct. I am eager to get my comments on Bill 10 on the record. I did see the minister come in and I'm thankful for her to be here as we bring the last 10 minutes in remarks on Bill 10.

I look forward to providing some respective on the vital questions surrounding child care here in Ontario, questions surrounding the safety of our children, the availability and affordability of care options and impacts on long-serving child care providers.

It was just a couple of weeks ago that our Ontario Ombudsman had his say on the problems inherent in Ontario's child care, systemic problems, really, that have been allowed to fester over the years of poor oversight and absent enforcement by a government that, until last year, seemed unbothered by the potential for tragedy. Of course, we were all horrified when that potential became a reality, and the government finally woke up to grasp the impact of its unmet responsibilities.

The long-standing concerns, unanswered complaints and the unheard early warning signs are all spelled out very vividly in the Ombudsman's report, *Careless About Child Care*. That really says it all, Speaker. The government has been careless about child care. But beyond the headlines, the stories within tell a tale of a government

sleeping at the wheel, unaware of the hazards jeopardizing the safety of our children here in Ontario.

As Mr. Marin points out in his executive summary, this government finally got its wake-up call when “over a seven-month period in 2013-2014, four young children died ... in the greater Toronto area.” We all know the details of the tragedy that befell two-year-old Eva Ravikovich, who died in Vaughan on July 8, 2013, in an illegal home daycare.

Specifically, Mr. Marin’s investigation centred on the system for responding to complaints and concerns about unlicensed child care operations, the point being that while this government has its eyes on registering and licensing, the fact is that no registration or licensing regime can work to protect the safety of our children if government is not going to respond to the complaints and concerns in the first place.

Speaker, as the Ombudsman report points out, there are “more than 800,000 Ontario children in unlicensed care—from newborns to age 12—more than double the number in licensed settings.” I’m sure we all know examples of families who have benefited from the child care provided by relatives, nannies, friends or babysitters, and we also know the concerning stories of those who are cared for in overcrowded homes, storefronts and offices. These would be in violation of the law, in fact, the current law. So if the law was enforced, perhaps we wouldn’t see the sad stories that confront us today.

Speaker, there’s no doubt that as waiting lists and the costs associated with licensed child care have grown, many Ontarians have turned to more affordable, more readily available informal options, often unaware of the rules and of the risks. Again, it is a government’s job—it was the government’s job before Bill 10 and it will be after Bill 10—to ensure Ontario parents are aware of the rules and know the risks before making crucial decisions on who will be protecting their children when they are at work.

As Mr. Marin indicates, while there are hundreds of complaints every year from parents looking for government to do its job, “Regrettably, the system for receiving and responding to such complaints and concerns has suffered from entrenched organizational malaise for years.” He also points out that, “In the case of Eva Ravikovich, the ministry repeatedly failed to follow proper procedures or follow up on multiple complaints, including from children’s aid society officials. Its ineptitude allowed this brazenly illegal daycare to operate unabated for many months, until Eva’s death incited ministry officials to take action.”

Further to that point, Marin tells us that, far from being an isolated incident, “the system for responding to complaints about unlicensed daycares included careless and inconsistent complaint intake practices. It was also infused with a reactive, passive and conflicted enforcement culture that focused on encouraging and educating illegal operators into compliance—to the detriment of ensuring the health, welfare and safety of the children.” Really, that is what is paramount here, and should be:

ensuring the health, welfare and safety of children. I’m just not sure that Bill 10 is the answer, of course, in its currently written format.

There is a long list of concerns Mr. Marin details in his overview of what is ailing a clearly broken system. He calls out the ministry for a non-existent case management system for tracking complaints about unlicensed operators, a disorganized process for documenting complaints and incomplete records, “dozens of cases where the ministry’s own directives and guidelines for responding to complaints were not followed, and where inspections of unlicensed daycare operations were delayed or skipped altogether.... such poor inspection practices as cursory and careless evidence gathering, inadequate assessment of evidence and failure to properly document inspection results” and absent training “on best practices for conducting investigations.” He adds that “many did not even possess a clear understanding of the legislation they were enforcing or of the ministry’s own policies and procedures.” Unbelievable.

Speaker, there it is: a clearly broken system failing Ontarians in its inability to anticipate problems, register complaints or enforce the current legislation. The big question is, does Bill 10 alleviate these problems or simply build more registering and licensing into a system that continues to be unresponsive to actual violations? Because if we continue down this path, we only stand to repeat the mistakes of the past that have led to the situation where we have had 82 unlicensed caregivers facing multiple complaints, and then 23 still operating illegally on second visits and 15 remaining in violation on subsequent visits. Speaker, it doesn’t matter if we beef up our legislation if the ministry refuses to act to enforce it. That’s the bottom line: Rules and regulations are only as good as the enforcement you put behind them.

#### 1350

We have so many good, diligent and safe day care providers, both licensed and unlicensed here in the province—there are clearly a few bad apples—and they’re now further impacted by a piece of legislation that has failed to really hear their voices. We call for the minister to perhaps use the winter to allow those folks to come in and have their say. It’s not just them, Speaker; it’s the parents, who you’ve yet to listen to, who are facing a limiting of their options and an associated major hike in fees once this legislation is put into place.

When I spoke to this bill in the previous session, I mentioned my own personal experience with day care decisions. I told you about my young son Murphy, who is at the J.W. Gerth YMCA—and I really can’t say enough about the good work they do down there. It wasn’t an easy decision for us on where to put Murphy; it isn’t for any parent. You’re entrusting others with the care and protection of your child, and that’s a difficult choice to make, but for most of us, it’s a choice that we have to make. When we do so, it’s important that we have the information we need to make that choice, and the assurance from government that it will be responsive and active, should concerns arise or enforcement become



necessary. Again, that hasn't been the case, of course, with the local YMCA. We and Murphy have had a great experience and look forward to his brother Lincoln following him in the coming months. Of course, we do have to send Lincoln in December to a home care provider to bridge that gap between 12 months and 18 months, when the YMCA can take him. The other option, obviously, was to bring him to a smaller in-home day care in the neighbourhood with a family member or friend.

In a way we were lucky to have a number of options when it came to our child's care so that we could weigh the plusses and minuses and come up with a decision that best fits our needs. Of course, that decision, again, was the YMCA, and we've never looked back.

But there is a concern, and we've all seen it in our emails, during constituency meetings and in our local papers. There is a concern that many, specifically in our rural communities, won't have these options if this legislation is passed in its current form. The concern is that many unlicensed day cares would be shut down and parents would be forced to look further afield and at much more expensive options that may be completely unaffordable. What then, Speaker? Well, I'll tell them what then. The parent, now facing limited and unaffordable day care options, seeks out care that this legislation has driven underground, only adding to the problems caused by the current lack of oversight and enforcement, setting the stage for further tragedy.

I think many of the concerns raised by the current writing of the bill could be dealt with if the government was prepared to engage in real consultation with parents, of course, and with the providers to ensure a well-thought-out and workable bill that maintains child care options while ensuring the safety and well-being of our children.

I'll leave it at that, and I hope to finish my remarks in the two minutes subsequent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm very happy to speak to the member from Leeds–Grenville and the member from Kitchener–Conestoga in their comments about Bill 10 and the changes that the government is planning to bring forward to our child care system.

I've had my time speaking to this bill, and I raised my concerns at that point. I really hope that the government was listening, because when it comes to inspections and when it comes to ensuring our children's safety, I'm not exactly sure that Bill 10 meets those needs.

The member spoke of four children dying within a seven-month period. That was due to the lack of consistency in inspections and making sure that our children were safe. The government heard complaints and the ministry had complaints regarding these providers, and yet they failed to act on those investigations. I believe that by the end of 2013 we had only 54 inspectors. They're planning on adding only six to that list. Yes, they will be specialized inspectors, but the inspectors that were currently there were not able to keep up with the

job. The Ombudsman completely uncovered that, talking about the lack of tools to be able to enforce that, to make sure that we were acting on those complaints. If they had acted on the complaints, we would have saved children's lives.

I think it's absolutely critical that we make sure we get it right when we come to committee for Bill 10. Six inspectors isn't going to cover it. We need to make sure that they're putting proper funds into the enforcement levels of our child care sector.

It's absolutely critical that we get it right. I hope that we can work together right across this House to make sure that we have the proper tools in place to do just that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's a pleasure to be able to speak to this bill.

I have many young families in my riding of Etobicoke Centre who are seeking child care options. I know that one of the things that's top of mind for them as they do that is their children's safety. It's also their children's future, ensuring that we have a child care system that's providing a strong foundation for them into their future.

Mr. Speaker, since 2003, child care funding has increased from \$532 million to close to \$1 billion. That's a 90% increase. This is a government that takes child care very seriously. Licensed child care capacity has grown by nearly 90,000 spaces since 2003, and that includes more than 22,000 new licensed, non-profit child care spaces since 2005. When we talk about the availability of child care options, I think this demonstrates that this government is committed to increasing those options and that those options have been increased in the licensed sector. That's why we also introduced the Child Care Modernization Act. If passed, it would modernize child care.

I would like to highlight that the Office of the Ombudsman undertook a comprehensive review into how the ministry responds to complaints about unlicensed child care providers. The recommendations put forth by the Ombudsman are helpful advice and have informed this legislation. That's why we introduced the Child Care Modernization Act. If passed, the legislation would expand the Ministry of Education's powers to support compliance and strengthen oversight of unlicensed child care settings, again in the spirit of making sure that we ensure our children's safety.

The last thing I would say is that the regulatory changes that we are proposing are as a result of extensive consultation with our partners in the child care sector. This is a government that's consulting with the child care sector, and broadly.

This is a bill that will ensure the safety of our children and oversight over unlicensed providers, and we are consulting broadly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to comment on my colleagues from Leeds–Grenville—Steve Clark—and Kitchener–Conestoga—Michael Harris. I also want to do

a shout-out to my colleague Garfield Dunlop from Simcoe North. He has done a great job.

His biggest concern with this bill overall is that there has not been consultation. It has not been talked about with those independent child care operators. What my colleagues have brought up is, there's an awful lot of opportunity here to do things for the benefit and safety of children. We're concerned that there are going to be very limited options available on behalf of kids, parents and those child care operators—very few affordable options.

The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario has raised concerns to the Ombudsman with regard to the report that was released. They're urging "further caution from the government and legislators on arbitrary passage of Bill 10 ... without further consultation on its long-term impact." They have very specific concerns about what could be happening. It's not going to prevent illegal day-care centres from operating, but it "could push many licensed child care centres into closing, thus eliminating much-needed, compliant and safe child care spaces."

Their concerns are that it could force the closure of licensed child care centres that have been serving their communities for decades; give government officials the ability to revoke a child care centre's licence without due process and with no real way to appeal the decision; prevent new licensed child care centres from opening; reduce the choices parents have—my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga referenced that with his own children—about what's best for their children; it will do little to address the problems around unlicensed daycares; and could result in 140,000 fewer child care spaces.

The minister has said, "Trust me." Sadly, after gas plant fiascos, wind turbines and Ornge issues that we've faced with this government, "trust me" is a little thin at this point, particularly when we're talking about our greatest asset, our most cherished, prized asset: our children, the future of our great country and our province.

What are they afraid of about going out and talking to the community? Some of the members have suggested that this is a dog-and-pony show, which is totally inaccurate. We need to be out there consulting, listening and doing what's in the best interests of our children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

1400

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm pleased to rise today, on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to respond to the comments that were offered on this bill by the member for Leeds—Grenville and the member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

I also, of course, want to acknowledge my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain for her advocacy and her foresight in writing to the Ombudsman to request an investigation into the adequacy of the protection that is offered by the province of Ontario for children in unlicensed child care operations.

Her triggering this investigation was a result of the tragic deaths of, I think, at least four young children who died in unlicensed daycare centres over a period of just seven months. This is something that, absolutely, as legislators and as a province, we need to act on. We need to address it and make sure no family has to suffer the enormous grief that would happen in those kinds of circumstances.

Our concern with this bill is that it doesn't really address that issue. The bill doesn't address the fact that the ministry has been unable to respond to complaints that are lodged about overcrowded and unlicensed daycares. We know that the ministry did not respond to 25 of the 448 complaints that were launched in the 18-month period before little Eva died. We are very concerned that the bill does not augment the inspection capacity of the ministry to the level that is necessary to respond to these concerns as they are reported by the ministry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Kitchener—Conestoga for his reply.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I would like to briefly thank the folks who chimed in on my colleague from Leeds—Grenville's and my remarks: the members for Hamilton Mountain and Etobicoke Centre; of course, my good friend and colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound; and, just recently, the member from London West.

While we do understand that the intention of this bill is to fix a broken system that has so much at stake, there are still so many voices out there that are calling for us to listen. I think of the YMCA proposal that came out of the From Conversations to Action document.

I think too of our Montessori schools that are concerned about the possible changes that will impact advances they've made in early childhood education. I've actually had the opportunity to visit our local Sunshine Montessori School, doing great work in Kitchener. I've heard from many, many of the parents, who are also concerned about this bill.

And I think of the literally hundreds of emails from unlicensed child care providers who are sounding the alarm bell over the impact that blanket licensing legislation will have on their ability to continue servicing the community.

Of course, from the hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands, of parents—I know the great work that my colleague, our critic Garfield Dunlop from Simcoe North, has been doing on this file. He is hearing from those parents who are pleading with us to ask the government to continue to listen, to not ram this through.

Before we consider passing Bill 10 into law, I do think there is a lot we can learn from those on the front lines, from parents facing life-altering decisions and certainly from the Ombudsman, whose report is a vital warning against lack of ministerial oversight, attention—and just simple management of the file they were given to look after.



Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity. I'll leave it at that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'm pleased to rise and weigh in on Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I will be sharing my time with my colleague from James Bay.

Child care, as we know, is key to the safety and well-being of children across this province and is a crucial piece to having a strong and robust economy. Child care is one of the most significant pressures facing young families, and parents are often left worrying about having access to care, the high cost of care and, of course, the safety of their children while they are being cared for.

According to the Ontario Ombudsman, there are 1.8 million children in Ontario aged 12 and under. He estimates that 396,000 of them are enrolled in licensed child care and 823,000 are enrolled in unlicensed child care.

He goes on to state that in 2012 there were 274 complaints received by the Ministry of Education about unlicensed child care, and in 2013 that number jumped significantly to 526 reports of concerns.

There are a number of problems with child care and how it's delivered in Ontario. We've all been made aware in this House and across the province of the very unfortunate situation of the deaths that we've had while children have been in care. When we last debated this bill, when it was being debated under the number of Bill 143 this past spring, at that time we had had four kids who had died in unlicensed child care in the past seven months. This, of course, prompted us to contact the Ontario Ombudsman to investigate the delivery of child care in the province. His report was just released on October 22 of this year.

It was really quite a scathing report. In his remarks he made during the release of his report, he stated that presently there is only one rule: Unlicensed operators can't care for more than five unrelated children under the age of 10, not counting their own children. Other than that, anyone can set themselves up as a daycare without requiring a licence or meeting any standards or qualifications.

He went on to state: "As lax as the rules are for unlicensed daycares, they were barely being enforced by a bureaucracy that shied away from inspections and investigations and preferred to use soft tools of encouragement instead...."

"Many of the problems date back years, but were compounded in 2012 by a botched transition of the daycare system from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education, which took it on along with the government's full-day kindergarten" initiative.

He went on to talk about some of the other key findings, along with the systemic problems that the Ombudsman identified in his report.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I think the member from Timmins-James Bay is very excited to weigh in on this,

and I understand that. If you could just give me another six minutes, I would certainly appreciate it.

Along with the systemic problems the Ombudsman identifies in this report, he mentions sloppy, inconsistent complaint intake practices and an inadequate complaint tracking system. He mentions that ministry guidelines are not being followed, inspections are delayed or never done, and that staff is untrained in conducting investigations or on the legislation they enforce. Again, this is awful stuff. There are poor inspection practices, careless evidence gathering, and the failure to involve or educate parents about daycare standards and facilities that are not in compliance with them. Again, a very scathing report.

This bill is widely regarded as the government's attempt to overhaul child care legislation to both stabilize the sector following the implementation of full-day kindergarten and address concerns over safety and oversight of unlicensed child care.

It repeals the Day Nurseries Act, which was implemented in 1946. I don't think anyone can argue that it's definitely in need of a review. It does a number of other things. I just wanted to quickly mention some of those other changes that it seeks.

It seeks to establish a duty for unlicensed child care providers to disclose to parents that they are unregulated, and to keep a record of this disclosure. Receipts must be provided free of charge to parents.

It creates a duty for employees to report imminent threats to the health and safety of the children in care. It outlines powers for inspectors, but as the member from Hamilton Mountain mentioned, despite the regulation and the clarifying of some of the standards, there aren't enough inspectors to go around the province to actually enforce some of these things.

It goes on to prohibit individuals from providing care if they've been convicted of offences under the act. It allows licensed home child care providers to care for up to six children, two of whom can be under two years of age, or up to 12 kids, including four under age two, if two adults are working together. It goes on to amend the Education Act to require school boards to provide or have a third party provide extended day programming for students up to grade 6 on all regular school days. Those are some of the big changes: again, the larger group sizes, as well as those extended day programs that will have to be offered by schools.

**1410**

The fact is, though, that, for years this Liberal government has been underfunding child care, leaving municipalities to pick up the tab just to maintain some of their existing services. Some of the key problems are the lack of spaces and the long wait-lists for subsidized spaces. There is a regulated full- or part-time centre-based space for only 20% of children in Ontario under age five. As of 2012, Ontario had 4,922 licensed child care centres with only 276,000 spaces. What's most glaring is the lack of infant spaces, and that's really the greatest challenge. We have at least 98,000 infants competing for just 10,000

licensed infant spaces each year. So we have 10 infants and only one space. That's that ratio, and that's horrible.

The bottom line is that we need to ensure that families have access to affordable, safe, regulated child care, that the enforcement has teeth and is effective. We need increased oversight and regulation. We need to address the fundamental problem of underfunding, and ultimately we need to commit to building a system of licensed, not-for-profit, affordable child care that meets the needs of families. This is an initiative that my federal NDP counterparts have taken up. They propose to deliver a \$15-a-day national child care program that is much needed across the country.

In Ontario, we have an opportunity to take the lead. We are looking at some fairly significant changes here, and these changes don't go far enough. In Ontario, child care can cost families \$70 to \$80 per day, and that's about \$20,000 per year. I know, especially in north-western Ontario, the wages aren't such that we could support that. In Ontario, we pay the highest rates in the country. Again, Ontario should be taking a lead role and use this opportunity to shape something that will help Ontarians now.

My concern in Kenora-Rainy River is that there's already a large and very serious shortage of child care spaces. As I mentioned, Bill 143 is the first broad examination of child care legislation that we've seen in close to 30 years, but despite that, I disagree with the minister's remarks that she made on October 22. When she was doing her lead, she referred to this bill as "comprehensive" and as having woven together "all the strands" relevant to this issue.

I think there are some very important concerns that have been raised that need to be considered, such as an adequate number of inspectors, addressing negligence in care, ensuring that those who provide the bulk of our care, i.e., the unlicensed care, are able to do so in a way that is regulated and safe for children, but also continues to enable and allow home-based child care providers to continue to bring this important source of income home every night.

So rushing through this, especially through a time allocation motion, is a very huge mistake. There are already very real and valid concerns that need to be addressed, including the most serious of all, and those are deaths in our system. We need to take the time to hear those concerns from all across this province, not just here in Toronto, as has been mentioned by other members. We need to bring this to committee, travel with the committee and make sure that we are hearing from people again across the province.

I'm hearing concerns in my riding like from a woman by the name of Helena who thinks that this is just outrageous. She thought it was outrageous that we were going full steam ahead back in the spring, but now I can only imagine how upsetting this is. She said, "They are trying to pass this, and it can't happen. It was hard enough to find child care in Fort Frances and now they want to introduce this bill? Yes, something needs to be

done, but this is not the answer to the problem." We need to make sure, of course, that these voices are being heard.

If this passes as is, we will likely lose child care spots in the north—and again, we already have a critical shortage.

It is incumbent upon us to recognize that new isn't necessarily better or perfect. We have to take our time and we have to get it right, because families across this province are trusting us with their most precious and valuable assets. We owe it to them to review this legislation carefully and ensure that no other children are lost while being cared for.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a perfectly good Liberal bill for Liberals, I must say, because Liberals really have got a knack for being able to say one thing in a bill and making it look as if they're doing something great, wonderful, the best in the world, the best in the universe, the best of all time, but not doing anything to really advance the needs of citizens in our communities from one end of this province to the other.

The government purports, by way of this bill, to fix a problem that's in daycare. Agreed. I think there are some regulatory changes that have to be done that are mentioned in the bill in order to deal with some of the tragedies that we've seen at unlicensed, unregulated daycares across this province. But I've just got to say that this bill is not going to do a heck of a lot for creating daycare spaces outside of this place, the Legislature of Ontario. Thank God there are cities like Toronto that are making some investments in daycare in their own municipalities by using provincial dollars—I get it. But the province is not leading when it comes to making sure that across this province there are viable options when it comes to not-for-profit daycare in communities from Kenora to Cornwall and from Sarnia all the way up to Moosonee. We don't have those options.

I just have to say that this is perfect, perfect double-speak on the part of the Liberals when it comes to saying one thing in the title of the bill, making it look as if they're doing something and they're being progressive, but what they're doing is allowing more private daycare in this province and not putting an emphasis on creating not-for-profit daycare spots across this province.

Thank God the federal NDP proposed, as we did here in Ontario some years ago, that we go to a Quebec-based model. At \$15 a day—it was less expensive in Quebec, but those were the days then. The Ontario NDP, under the leadership of Howard Hampton some years ago, suggested that particular idea, put it forward, made it an item going into the Legislature, and unfortunately it was not picked up on. Let's hope that our federal cousins, the federal New Democrats under Thomas Mulcair, have more success.

I can tell you, there's not one person in this Legislature who is not affected by difficulty of access to daycare. I look at my own family. I've got four grand-



children. I've got two who have gone through the not-for-profit daycare services in the city of Timmins and are now in school. The option of going into the not-for-profit was difficult because there are long waiting lists. There's a limited number of spaces. If you don't get a space, and mom and dad have got to work, what are you going to do? You've got to go to a private system or you've got to go to *mémère's* place, or you've got to go to the neighbour down the road or an aunt or an uncle or a good friend.

As for Ellisa, our third granddaughter, she's still in the daycare system, but again in the private. Why? Because the public has not been an option because it has not been available. Our youngest one was just born a month ago, so it will be a while before she gets into daycare.

But I would just say that there are not options for parents to opt in for not-for-profit daycare services across this province. If this province and this government were saying, "We're prepared to move in that direction," I can tell you, my colleague from Hamilton Mountain and my colleagues from across this caucus would say, "Yes, let's do it. Let's look at ways of making the investments that are necessary in a prudent way, within the fiscal realities that we have here in Ontario, to be able to give options to parents to opt in to regulated not-for-profit child care across this province."

Kathleen Wynne—I should say the Premier—and the Liberals love to talk the talk: "We're progressive. We're open. We do all wonderful things for wonderful people." But when it comes to actually doing something, they are really helping their friends in the private sector before helping the people they should be helping, which is families across this province trying to access daycare.

I hearken to a point my colleague from Kenora—Rainy River made, and she's right. The government is time-allocating this bill, which is a real shame, because it would be beneficial to have this bill as a way to have a discussion on daycare in communities across this province. I wouldn't argue, as the House leader for the NDP, that it has to go to every community in Ontario, but certainly we can pick a number of communities and we can say, "Let's find out a snapshot of what is going on in this province, or what's not going on in this province, when it comes to daycare," and then bring that back to this Legislature so that we can decide.

1420

I remember when I first got elected, our government had decided that we would make a pretty massive investment in daycare, so we were investing in and creating not-for-profit daycare centres as options for people across this province. From Cornwall to Kenora, from Sarnia to Moosonee, there was something going on when it came to not-for-profit daycare spots being increased and offered to parents across this province.

At the time there was an ideological difference between the Conservatives and Liberals against the New Democrat not-for-profit model. Both the Liberals—I think they were showing their true colours back then—along with the Conservatives said that we need to make

sure that we create an option in the private sector. My point is this: Dianne Poole, a member of the Liberal caucus at that time, which was the official opposition, had decided that she wanted to put forward, in committee, what was called at that time a standing 123, so that a committee can travel outside of this Legislature to hear from the private sector when it comes to what should happen in the daycare sector. The NDP was not focusing on that at the time because we were focusing our energies and our efforts on making sure that we expanded the not-for-profit sector. We gave her that because we thought it was important to have that discussion. Yes, it was allowed under the standing orders, but the government said: "You know what? This is an important discussion to have across the province, and we should hear from all sides. We should hear from those who want to increase the not-for-profit sector,"—as we did—"but we should also hear from the private sector."

I remember hearing from various daycares in my riding, mostly at that time private because it was mostly private daycare in my particular communities, who were really aghast that we weren't putting money in their pockets and that we were putting it into not-for-profit. We had said, "No, we're not going to do that. Our investments will go in not-for-profit, and we'll look at ideas that you may have when it comes to making your lives a little bit easier."

So yes, this bill should travel. I think this is a crying shame. We see Kathleen Wynne, the Premier of Ontario, following down the same path as Dalton McGuinty, former Liberal Premier of Ontario, and that is, "We're going to time-allocate everything in this place. Why? Because we can." Because it's too darned hard for them to sit down with the opposition and to figure out an agenda about how we're able to have certain bills travel to be able to do what needs to be done as far as the scrutiny that's necessary to make better legislation.

When I first got elected in this place in 1990, there was no time allocation. Members were allowed to speak as long as they wanted on a bill, and there was no time allocation. What that did is, it forced the opposition and the government to work together to figure out how to get the agenda of the House through. A government has the right to govern. The government has the right to pass their agenda. That's why they're a majority government. But a majority government also has to recognize that the responsibility of the opposition is to scrutinize and to give voice to those people out there who may have a different or a similar view of the government when it comes to a particular issue.

For this government to say that they're going to time-allocate this bill, as they're going to be time-allocating every other bill, is a crying shame, because what we've got is essentially no scrutiny on what is an important issue for the province of Ontario. We're not giving, contrary to what the Premier says, voice to the people of this province to come to a legislative committee somewhere in their community, somewhere in Ontario, and speak to the issue of daycare as it relates to them. All a

parent knows is not the regulations of what will or will not happen in the private sector daycare system; all a parent knows is, "I can or I can't get daycare," or "I can or I can't afford the daycare that's being offered to me." This bill doesn't speak to that. If we had an opportunity to travel, you would hear that. Maybe the government would then start practising what it preaches and would actually try to do something progressive for the people of this province, rather than yet again having a title of a bill that says something nice but, at the end of the day, helping your private sector friends and forgetting that the not-for-profit daycare sector needs your help—something that you haven't done for a while, and something that sorely needs your attention.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I want to thank the members from Leeds–Grenville, Kitchener–Conestoga, Kenora–Rainy River, Timmins–James Bay and the other members who have spoken to this this afternoon.

My wife and I are the parents of a five-year-old. For the last four years, we have experienced all the trials and tribulations of trying to navigate the child care system in this province, seeking out care for an infant, seeking out care before kindergarten and now, before- and after-school programs. To me, this is really landmark legislation. It's a badly needed overhaul of a system that hasn't really been properly looked at in decades. It's going to put some badly needed teeth into the enforcement around unlicensed daycares to prevent some of the horrific tragedies that have occurred. Any parent or grandparent, or human being in this Legislature, will do anything they can to prevent that from happening again.

I'm also very heartened by the fact that there will be tools put in place through this legislation that make it easier for parents to get good information, through an online tool, about the daycare that's available. That's something my wife and I had the privilege of using in our community, because that was available. Now it will be available province-wide. It's very important for parents to be able to find information about the daycare that's available in their community.

I think it's also extremely important that before- and after-school programs are now going to be expanded—a key part of the child care services we need in this province—and that this government is responding to the Ombudsman's recommendations and enacting legislation to give force and effect to the recommendations of the Ombudsman.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I think we're hearing some things going round and round here. We are not supportive of the bill in its present form, primarily because—I mean, it's very simple: About 800,000 children in the province have independent daycare. They have not had a say in what this legislation means. There has been no consultation; absolutely none. The agencies, of course, have all been consulted with. The ministry brags about

their program of consultation. But the people who look after about 75% of the children, from infant to 12 years of age, have not been consulted. A couple of my colleagues today mentioned that they're not getting any complaints at their constituency offices. Why? Because the people don't know about it. That's why.

That's why I'm completely in support of the comments made by the member from Timmins–James Bay about travelling the bill. We're not talking about going to every little town, but we are talking about having a couple of weeks in the winter recess and possibly getting to areas like Thunder Bay, possibly Sudbury or Timmins in the north, Windsor, Kitchener—some of those kinds of communities.

We are going to have rallies regardless—we've had a couple already and there are others planned—because we've got to get the word out to the people. They've absolutely got to find out about this, because it's going to have a negative impact not only on the young people—the daycare spaces that are not there for them—but on the pocketbooks of all those moms out there who are helping babysit a couple of kids. That will have a negative impact. The government seems to ignore that, and what the economic downside of that will be.

So, we won't stop on this. I can't believe they would even consider time-allocating this. But believe me: I've seen them do a lot of worse things. It was no problem for Kathleen Wynne to travel to China when she already had the deals made before she went over there, but it's a big deal for this committee to travel around the province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to remind members that we refer to other members by their riding name or by their ministerial name.

Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm very pleased to be able to comment to my caucus members, the member from Kenora–Rainy River and the member from Timmins–James Bay.

This is a really important bill. We've heard and we've seen, in the last few weeks since we've been back, a lot of time allocation, and I'm really concerned that that could quite possibly happen with this bill. I know we've definitely heard rumblings that that's going to happen. I think every member in this House should be standing up and talking about the importance of child care in their areas.

We hear in the north that they're already struggling to find licensed child care. We know that pretty much close to 80% of child care in this province is in the unlicensed sector. So, we don't have enough licensed spaces, we don't have affordable child care, and currently in the old legislation, we don't have safe child care. We need to ensure that we get this bill right, that we know, when we drop our children off at child care in the morning, that we're going to pick those children up safe and sound at the end of the day.



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There's a lot in this bill, but nothing that's going to ensure that we're getting the inspections done. There's nothing forcing the government and the ministry to make sure that the inspectors are showing up on time. We heard from the Ombudsman that they were sloppy, that they were inconsistent when they were dealing with complaints and issues, and that they didn't have enough work hours to make sure that they were getting out to those child care facilities to act on those complaints.

I think that we definitely need to make sure that the government is working with all members of this House, with the people of this province who are providing this service, to make sure that we get it right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It does give me great pleasure to comment on the remarks from the members from Timmins-James Bay and Kenora-Rainy River.

We would agree, I think, the member from Timmins and I, that this is not an issue in this bill about allocating more money towards a non-profit daycare centre. That may be a further discussion we need to have. This bill is essentially about keeping our children safe. It's a regulatory measure where we're going to put the rules and practices in place to ensure our children are safe. We're expanding the number of spaces in licensed programs and we're giving inspectors the tools they need to ensure that our children are kept safe by putting proper rules and regulations in place.

It's about issuing new administrative penalties—up to \$100,000 per infraction—if the daycare space, licensed or unlicensed, isn't being safe. It's about increasing the maximum penalty for legal offences from \$2,000 to up to \$250,000. This is about keeping children safe. I want us to be very clear about this.

For us to consider taking the bill across—we would love to have the debate at the right time with the right bill, to go across the province and have committee hearings and discussions. I'm glad to hear that the member opposite, the House leader, is going to sit down and negotiate, but it looks like the members opposite want to take every bill across the province, which is totally impractical. On bills where there is such widespread agreement on issues, it's not necessary. I look forward to them sitting down with our House leader to find those bills which are important to take and get the input from the north, from the west, from the south. We respect that input and we look forward to it, but this just isn't one of those bills.

The members have identified numerous areas where the past has been lacking. We are now in a situation to rectify it, and we urge all members opposite: Support these administrative changes to make sure our licensed and unlicensed daycare spaces are safe and our children are kept safe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments.

I return to the member for Timmins-James Bay for his reply.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just say, yet again: There's no question that there's a need to do something with unregulated daycare centres. That, I think, all of us agree with.

The question becomes: What is it that this government is doing? They're trying to pretend that they're doing something that's really going to be ground-moving when it comes to giving parents the ability and the option to choose a daycare centre somewhere near the spot where they happen to live, that allows them to have some kind of option.

But we all know what has happened with this Liberal government. They have done almost nothing when it comes to supporting—they don't have a not-for-profit daycare strategy in this province. The city of Toronto has done so and has made some investments—why?—because the province has given them some money. But this province, this government, has not put in place a policy of trying to find a way to shore up and expand the not-for-profit sector.

We know that it's an issue because, in communities across Ontario, every member in this House—be it a parent, a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle or the neighbour of a child—knows of somebody who has had a struggle to find access to, first of all, a regulated daycare spot, but, more importantly, a not-for-profit daycare spot, because those spots are used up pretty quickly because there are not a lot of them out there.

Again it's a question of doublespeak on the part of the Premier. The Premier and the Liberals are notorious for saying one thing in the title and doing something completely different in the actual details of the bill. The title is great. You're going to do something in order to fix the lack of regulation in the unregulated daycare sector. Fine; we don't have a problem with that. But this is not going to give parents from Kenora to Cornwall, from Sarnia to Moosonee, the additional options of being able to find a place to get their child or their grandchild to when it comes to a regulated daycare spot somewhere in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and one-half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** No further debate, Mr. Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** You should be ashamed of yourself, Naqvi.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Member for Simcoe North, please withdraw that comment. I would ask the member for Simcoe North to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Withdraw, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Stand up.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Orders of the day.

PUBLIC SECTOR  
AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY  
AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR  
LA RESPONSABILISATION  
ET LA TRANSPARENCE  
DU SECTEUR PUBLIC  
ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 30, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When this bill was last debated by the House, the member for Kitchener—Waterloo had the floor, and I understand she has 29 minutes and 12 seconds remaining in her presentation. I recognize the member for Kitchener—Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'll try to get it just down to that last 12 seconds.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to stand in this House once again to debate the value or non-value of Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014.

I have to be completely honest, just put it right there on the table: I have a really hard time trying to contain my disdain for a piece of legislation like this. It's an omnibus bill which contains 11 schedules, all of which have little tidbits of value but actually don't accomplish the goals for which they've been set out.

Last Thursday, when I had the privilege of standing up in this House, I talked primarily about the pseudo-compensation framework—that's what I'm calling it these days—which pretends to put a hard cap on broader public service executive salaries. We've had so many examples to date, over the last 12 years in particular, where executive salaries have continued to rise. The contracts that are negotiated between government agencies and this government are excessive.

When you have an executive, for instance, of the Pan Am Games who clearly had cost overruns, where there were serious issues of quality control and the integrity of the proceedings for the entire Pan Am/Parapan Am Games was called into question for very good reasons by the opposition parties, for that person to leave with a compensation package deal of almost half a million dollars was crazy. I mean, it was such a slap in the face to

the people of this province who are struggling day in and day out.

Bill 8, under the reflective schedule, does not commit to a hard cap. It does not clearly indicate which executives in the broader public service would fall under the purview of this legislation. It is purely window dressing and public pressure, and yet it's contained within a piece of legislation which has some important pieces around accountability. But it doesn't have the teeth, it doesn't have the mechanisms in place to actually, truly be accountable—in fact, even transparent.

One of the issues that for us is completely and utterly non-negotiable is the integrity of the so-called patient ombudsman. I'm referring to this ombudsman as an imaginary ombudsman because they do not have the powers to actually protect patients.

It's a common theme. Why bring forward a piece of legislation which does not accomplish the goals for which it was set out? Last Thursday—and I'm going to give you a very quick overview. There are 14 very good reasons why the patient ombudsman, as illustrated in this piece of legislation, will be ineffective.

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Very quickly, it's appointed by cabinet and not the Legislature. The ombudsman, as portrayed in this legislation, is not an officer of the Legislature; instead, the patient ombudsman will be an employee of the health quality council. I want to interject very quickly, because I saw this great quote from the Ombudsman who said—in fact, the Ombudsman has fired something of a shot across the bow. He welcomed the creation of the patient ombudsman while emphasizing that his office has oversight over the Ontario Health Quality Council who, in turn, have the responsibility for the creation of the patient ombudsman. He would be all over the new ombudsman's mandate “like a dirty shirt,” and we wish him well in that. But it shouldn't come to that. You shouldn't have the Ombudsman having to watch very closely the goings-on of the patient ombudsman when there are so many issues in the health portfolio in the province of Ontario.

Just last week, thank goodness, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the midwives of Ontario and the Canadian federation of doctors came here and said that medical tourism is a huge issue in this province, and yet there's no plan in place. The Minister of Health stands up and says that it's just not true. You can say anything, I guess, you want in this place and say it's not true, but we have evidence to counter that.

But going back to the patient ombudsman and why the proposal is so weak: As I said, it's appointed by cabinet; not an officer of the Legislature; no set term of office, so that if this patient ombudsman becomes too critical of the government of the day, then that term could be closed down. Cabinet is authorized to revoke the patient ombudsman appointment at any time. So do we really expect the patient ombudsman to be critical of the government? “Boom,” you know, “too critical. Bye. You don't have a job.” It would be great if we didn't have examples of that already happening, but we do.



Not explicitly forbidden from holding other employment: We're actually saying in legislation that the patient ombudsman for the province of Ontario—this doesn't have to be their sole responsibility. They could have other jobs. They can be a newscaster. They can be a librarian. They can be the patient ombudsman on the side—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** A Ministry of Health official.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Not a Ministry of Health official. I hope that's not in here.

The patient ombudsman is also limited in scope to only hospitals, CCACs and long-term-care homes—not allowed to respond to patient concerns from air ambulance services like Ornge. My colleagues have already spoken at length about Ornge, and quite comprehensively—but this is an issue with this new, proposed ombudsman. They can't go into a retirement home. If you've been asleep for the last 10 years, you will have missed the fact that there are huge tensions in the retirement homes in the province of Ontario and that conflict has happened because you have children who have placed their parents at various stages of need and of care into retirement homes. If those retirement homes are driven by a profit agenda, then what they have been promised at the outset is not what is delivered in that for-profit home. You've seen dietary requirements not met. You have seen hygiene requirements not met. They have been promised this compassionate and loving setting, and when the children of the parents who are in that home come into that setting, they see anything but a caring and compassionate place.

These are seniors who have built this province, and yet this patient ombudsman is not able to go into those settings and ensure that there is a level of quality of service, a level of dignity, a level of integrity. It's really quite something.

They also cannot go into homes for special care or out-of-hospital premises like private clinics. We've just heard this morning that there has been a 31% increase in private clinics in the province of Ontario. We just heard this morning that one out of every seven of those clinics falls well below the standards of care that we would expect. So if there was ever a reason to have someone be able to have that oversight to go into those clinics, it would be now, especially with the accelerated privatization agenda of this Liberal government. Now they're not even being sneaky about it. Now, they're just saying, "You know what? We're not going to support public health care anymore in a comprehensive, transparent, accountable way. We're just going to let it come in on the side."

It's like Scopes "R" Us in the parking lot. If you need a colonoscopy and you can't get into a hospital because their hospital budgets have been cut—they've been flat-lined now for three years, which is essentially a cut. Now, if you can't get a colonoscopy—you have a family history and you are scared, and with an aging demographic, this is not an inconceivable situation—you can go to one of these private clinics, where the evidence shows that those colonoscopies are done faster, with less

oversight, without the precautionary medical oversight put in place. And some of those patients end up in public care anyway because the private clinic did such a shoddy job.

This patient ombudsman can't investigate that. But that's okay by the Liberal government. You've put something into place, and you take your chances. It's like Russian roulette in the private health care system for the people of this province.

The patient ombudsman will need to facilitate co-operation amongst patients and health care sectors. In contrast, the provincial Ombudsman compels co-operation from government organizations because the Ombudsman Act has real teeth. This person does not. This person does not have the power to do the job that you are selling to the people of this province.

Finally, the ombudsman is not allowed to make recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Really; this is actually in the act. The ombudsman cannot make recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care following the conclusions of any investigation. It can only make recommendations to hospitals and CCACs and long-term-care homes.

So all this person can do is put a band-aid on a little problem. But those little problems become big problems for the broader public health care system because if you try to save money right now by offering a very quick, for-profit medical treatment service and that person develops complications—as the research shows that they will do—then they end up in the public health care system, and it costs us more. Privatization is not good value for the people of this province. In fact, it costs more. It compromises the entire goal of a public health care system.

I think last Thursday I went on at length about how strongly I feel about the lack of oversight for the patient ombudsman. There are advocates in hospitals. They do very good work. They try to mitigate some of the damage that has actually happened because it's a patchwork system of health care in some places. And people need advocates because it's a complicated system; it's actually not very simple for people to use.

Those were the areas that I focused on: the non-existent oversight and public sector pay caps—the no cap, pay cap piece of this legislation; and the lack of power to actually have a patient ombudsman who could actually serve the people of this province. I thought I saw some people listening at the time, but I could be wrong, for sure.

Today, I want to focus on the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. There hasn't been too much mention about this. A lot of people may not know how important the provincial advocate is for children in the province of Ontario.

I had the distinct pleasure of having some dealings with this office when I was president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, particularly on First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth issues, certainly in my role at the school board, when I was fighting for greater re-

sources for students with special needs. School boards are struggling. This is a reality. They're struggling in the north, they're struggling in the rural areas, and they're struggling in the inner cities to deal with special-needs students in the education system.

I first came to actually know the provincial advocate when I was dealing with a brave young woman named Shannon Koostachin. She was fighting for a school in Attawapiskat. The member for that riding, Charlie Angus, read something that I'd written in the Toronto Star, and he reached out, and we pulled the Ontario Catholic Teachers Association, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Association, ETFO—we pulled the non-First-Nations education advocates into the fold, into the circle. We raised our voices collectively to fight for a stronger and equal education system for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.

We were largely successful in shaming the federal government into doing what they said they were going to do. If you ever have the great misfortune of actually having to deal with what is now—it was INAC; now it's aboriginal and northern affairs—if you ever have the great misfortune of having to deal with that level of government on an issue that's so laden with discrimination and racism on issues of equal rights of education for First Nations children in this country, it's an experience that actually changes you; it really does. So we reached out, of course, to the provincial advocate, because all children fall under the purview of the provincial advocate. Quite honestly, they have done some very good work in moving forward an inclusive agenda to ensure that all voices are heard on this issue.

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Some people have said to me, "What are you going to talk about today?" I said, "I really want to talk about the advocate for children." They said, "Well, you're a finance critic; you're a Treasury Board critic. Maybe focus more on the money." You know, there are lots of opportunities to focus on the money and how this piece of legislation, which is not transparent, which is not accountable, will affect the final dollar. But you can also make a really good case, both a social policy case and an economic case, for offering equal opportunity for children in this province, to offer compassionate care, to offer caring opportunities, be they with the CAS, with school boards, with health care or with nutrition. You can make a good financial case for doing the right thing early in the life of a child, so that you actually don't have to spend much more down the line. It's the upstream philosophy. It's not a philosophy this government particularly believes in, but it's something that I feel strongly about.

Bill 8 has, under schedule 10, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth—or lack of powers relative to other provincial children's advocates. This is the issue at play: Other provincial advocates in this country have certain powers where they can protect children; unfortunately, in the province of Ontario, the provincial advo-

cate has done a lot of work with very little resources and very little powers.

Obviously Bill 8 is, as I mentioned, an omnibus bill; it has these 11 schedules contained within it. But prior to Bill 8 coming forward as this somewhat ominous piece of legislation, the provincial advocate weighed in on what was formally Bill 179, Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. I'm just going to read from their report of what they said at that time about this piece of legislation: "While the proposed amendments are an important first step in enhancing safeguards of children or youth in Ontario, they fall short of the protections available to young people in almost every other Canadian province."

So, on the broader plan, Ontario, one of the biggest provinces, the province that has the most children, falls short in the grand scheme of things. They go on to say that their concerns about the proposed amendments are threefold. There is a discrepancy between the stated intent of the proposed amendments and the actual powers given to the advocate's office—this confirms our perspective. The new powers only apply to a select group of children within the mandate—this is obviously problematic. And the proposed powers fall short of what is available to the Ombudsman of Ontario and all the other provincial child advocate offices in Canada in exercising their statutory function.

Why bring forward a piece of legislation that is not going to meet the goals of protecting children or advocating for children. I mean, where does that fall in the grand scheme of your priorities? I know what the press release says. I know that you've packaged this up under the guise of accountability and transparency, but if it doesn't work, why put it on the floor? Why bring it to your colleagues in this Legislature? It has to be frustrating for some of you over there to see that this schedule, which had its original flaws under Bill 179, is exactly the way it is now under Bill 8.

Even though the provincial advocate and people from across the province—people with the real lived experiences of not being able to protect children—came forward with amendments, they're not reflected. So you didn't take the opportunity to make this schedule under Bill 8 stronger. And I have to question—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Can you tell that guy to be quiet?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Yes. I need to be able to hear the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, so I would ask the members to respect that.

I return to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you. It's an important issue.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Be quiet. Go have a coffee or something.

This is a big problem. The advocate is prohibited from investigating various matters, including matters that are eligible for review or have been decided by the Child and Family Services Review Board. The problem is that all



complaints from a person receiving a service from a children's aid society are eligible for review by the Child and Family Services Review Board, while the advocate's office would be allowed to conduct a systemic investigation into a matter that is eligible for review by the Child and Family Services Review Board once the processes under the Child and Family Services Review Board are completed.

"To make it abundantly clear," in the words of the child advocate, "individual complaints about a children's aid society made by children and youth are excluded from investigation by the advocate's office." The very children who have been victimized in many ways in their lives, the children who are most vulnerable, the children who live on the margins, the children whose trust—there has already been a huge breach of trust in their lives. Those voices are not to be listened to by the provincial advocate. It's hard to believe that whoever crafted this piece of legislation would leave out the voices of children.

We have evidence—and I have this quote on my desk; it's from page 4 of the throne speech by the Liberal government—that says that you will put evidence above partisanship. Well, I have the evidence. The evidence from the provincial advocate says that he needs to be able to act on the voices of children who have been abused, whose rights have been violated, whose trust has been broken, and yet the provincial advocate has no right to fully investigate systemically.

You can't talk about the children's aid societies in the province of Ontario and not know that that is a system that is broken. We have known this for a long time, which is why we have called for full oversight, all the powers that the Ombudsman would need to correct, to systemically change and rebuild and strengthen a system of caring for children.

There are good people involved in children's aid societies across this province; there are very good people. They are so frustrated by the bureaucracy, by the red tape, by the priorities that come from this government because the Liberals have fully embraced a top-down and centralized method of correcting or owning or downloading their philosophies onto everybody, from municipalities to school boards to children's aid societies to hospitals, for that matter—although they seem very reluctant to weigh in on the medical tourism that hospitals have embraced. But this is an issue that we're going to continue.

Aside from highlighting the lack of powers relative to other children's advocates, Ontario's advocate remains alone among the country's provincial children's advocates in not having the power to compel information from service providers, institutions, governments, and public bodies that pertain to the advocate's mandate. You might as well just give him a pair of handcuffs and say, "Go out and do your best," because all advocates in all other provinces in this great country have that power. In Alberta, in British Columbia and in Saskatchewan, the children's advocates have the ability to review any information that the advocate deems necessary to exercise

their powers and perform their duties. The Ontario advocate in the great province of Ontario does not. This continues under this schedule, even though the provincial advocate weighed in and gave constructive criticism and meaningful amendments to what was then Bill 179, but this government has made no efforts whatsoever to change or alter or rebuild this piece of legislation.

Under the schedule in Bill 8, the children's advocate is restricted from investigating in any other area of their mandate other than children's aid societies and licensed homes who have service agreements with the CAS. What does this mean? It means that the children's advocate cannot look into unlicensed homes, even though we know that they are a growing phenomenon. In Kitchener-Waterloo, because there have been cutbacks, because budgets have been flatlined, there is a growing and emerging trend in unlicensed homes for children. It's happening in all of your ridings. You could just walk around your neighbourhood and you would likely be able to find one. But this provincial advocate—he or she—cannot go into that home to make sure that those standards are being upheld. What does that say to you about how this government values children? Where do children fall in the grand priority between travelling to China and privatizing and selling off hydro? Where do children fall in the grand scheme of things?

#### 1500

This Ombudsman says he cannot look into the children's mental health system. This is the huge issue. Right? There was a 12-year-old little boy who took his life because the system failed him. The children's advocate should be able to systemically look at every door that was closed in the face of that family. He should be empowered to actually act on behalf of this child who took his own life. Mental health affects every single one of us. The stat is 1 in 5, but when we were advocating for our provincial mental health advocate at the Ontario public school boards, the trickle-out effect of mental health issues in this province—you can argue it from an economic perspective, you can argue it from a financial, an upstream perspective, but really, at the end of the day, we are talking about changing and altering the way that we see well-being: mental health and physical health as one. This culture of well-being that has been talked about for quite some time by this government has been just that—it's just been talk.

Just to recap: The advocate cannot look into the children's mental health system. The youth justice system—I mean, we have been standing in this House and raising these issues about the inequities and the lack of resources when you send youth into an incarcerated justice system. And what happens there? Just as I was elected, one of the first places I went was the jail that Ashley Smith was kept at. The two issues are connected: the justice system and mental health.

I got a tour of the facility and we talked about a lack of resources. We talked about what the justice system is trying to do in the face of a lack of resources. I saw the cell where Ashley Smith took her own life. It will always

be with me. I take it with me everywhere I go because that's the responsibility that I have as a member of provincial Parliament: to not forget, to not turn away, to not ignore the circumstances that are facing the youth in the province of Ontario. The provincial advocate would probably feel the same way. I'm sure that he does. But this piece of legislation won't strengthen his position. It won't empower him to address the systemic issues that face not only the education system but the health care system and the youth justice system. Finally, he's not even able to advocate for those who are in homes, or services for blind or deaf youth.

You have to understand the frustration. The frustration is real, because you had an opportunity—even if you wanted to bury it under the guise of public sector and MPP accountability and transparency, you could have actually made it stronger. You could have done the right thing. You could have made sure that the provincial advocate had the resources to actually do his or her job. And it has to be a calling because it must be an exercise in frustration to be in that position, to have that title, and not to have that power.

I'd just like to summarize: This is a public relations exercise. This essentially is a piece of legislation which the Liberal government is using to squeeze the Conservatives and the NDP and say, "You know what? Look. We're different now. We're different. We are going to put these measures into place so you will forget about the exorbitant salaries and the buyouts to the broader public service at the executive level. You're going to forget about the gas plants, forget about Ornge, forget about the lack of oversight in the health care system."

We now have this piece of legislation that pretends that accountability and transparency are actually a priority, when I've given evidence to the contrary. I've given evidence to the contrary on the broader public sector salaries, on the patient ombudsman and on the provincial children's advocate. You can't dispute it. The legislation is weak. It was designed to be weak. It's designed to be weak with intention, and it doesn't do what probably many of you on that side of the House want to do. Yet it's before us. It's too big a piece of legislation.

There are accountability measures that we support, of course. Our expenses should be posted. I have no issues with that. We live in the public arena, so parts of our lives are open for everyone to see. We live with that and that is fine. But what we can't live with, what is not negotiable, is to put forward a piece of legislation which pretends to protect patients in the face of an accelerated privatization agenda on health care and that pretends to protect children when it does not do so. So we cannot support this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for your time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I would first of all commend my honourable colleague from the third party on her passion

and I guess you could say dedication to this front, but I must say, my endorsement of her remarks stops there.

I have to just question a number of different things that she said. For example, she's already attempting to discredit and essentially talk down the office of patient ombudsman and his prospective powers before the thing is actually created. This is quite remarkable. As a physician, I can tell you that as it is rolled out to the community and more individuals will have access to a complaints mechanism beyond what is existing—whether it is, for example, through the college of physicians and surgeons or the college of family physicians and their various specialty boards, to actually make physical, live, interactive complaints with an individual assigned with regard to hospitals, long-term-care homes and community care access centres—you would think that would be something that the NDP would support.

I'm not sure if they're not supporting it because of their commitment, which they may or may not follow through on, of the \$600-million further reduction to the budget of Ontario, as was presented not too long ago in the election. But I would say it is a little bit questionable. The NDP seems to have a little bit unusual focus. Either it's a spend or it's a decrease. You might want to unify some of your thinking on that.

I can tell you, though, as well, you were sort of going after the issue of colonoscopy and complaints at individual or supposedly privatized colonoscopy clinics. Let's just back up for a moment. This government has done more to put forward the issue of colon cancer, its screening, mandatory letters and family physician incentivization to deal with colon cancer than any government in the history of this country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My pleasure, and just a couple of comments.

The member from Kitchener–Waterloo started off by talking a lot about compensation and sweet deals. I just want to remind the listeners out there that are watching today that the NDP, for two consecutive budgets, propped up the Liberal government to allow most of what we're dealing with today. All those negative impacts out there in our province were supported by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and her party. We have to talk with some principle here and ensure that we're always on the same track.

I do agree with her from the perspective that there are a number of acts affected here. It is an omnibus. We have great concern. There are pieces of it that we actually think are good in there. Like most pieces of legislation, if we can have discussion, if we can have proper debate, we can find amendments. We'll bring some positive thought processes to a lot of these types of things and ensure that it is truly a bill that is going to serve the people of Ontario.

One of the key concerns I have in here is that the Treasury Board president has not costed savings or expenditures even for this bill. Again, it's one of those



things that sounds good in a sound bite. You throw it out and the public says, "Oh, they're really working on this." Yet a week ago, this very same government, actually, if we're talking about ethics, would not allow Laura Miller and Peter Faist to be brought in front of the legislative committee to actually hear the true truth about the cost of those gas plants.

This morning, I brought up the concerns from the Ornge report and that the Minister of Health of the day was actually rewarded for taking no action on that file for two years.

So this is the other type of legislation that we're concerned about. They come out with a sound bite. They make the public believe that they're doing wonderful things. At the end of the day, what are going to be the ramifications? What are going to be those negative impacts that will negatively impact the great people that we're given the privilege to serve?

There are a lot of things in here that we need to review. We want to make sure that it goes to committee and has full and proper consultation, not like the bill we previously debated where they're not taking it to the province of Ontario and listening to the people. Mr. Speaker, there's lots of work to be done with this bill yet.

1510

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I listened intently to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. What I heard was a very meticulous recap of some of the points of the bill—the fact that the patient ombudsman really isn't an ombudsman, that the real Ombudsman has concerns, and in fact we're the only province in Canada that doesn't have real Ombudsman oversight of our health care or MUSH sector.

She went into the advocate for children and youth and how the advocate himself says that this hasn't gone far enough and that, in fact, much more needs to be done and that he is not given the powers he needs to do his job efficiently and effectively for the children of our province. Surely, the government would have consulted with him and with the real Ombudsman before drafting this piece of legislation. Clearly, they haven't.

She talked about the omnibus aspect of this bill—more to the point, as she said, the ominous aspect of this bill, because there is some. It truly is Orwellian when you title a bill one thing and then proceed to do something else with it. I'll talk more about Orwell in my section later.

She talked about the tragedy of Ashley Smith. I had corrections officers in my office not too long ago. Ontario corrections officers don't get any mental health training at all. They would like some, thank you very much. They would like some training like their federal counterparts get, and that's only two days.

This is a government, again, that purports to do one thing, as you've heard. As she said many times, this is not a bill to actually achieve transparency or accountability. This is, in fact, a public relations exercise to try to

pretend to actually afford accountability and transparency. I give her great thanks for her meticulous research.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm pleased to respond to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I agree with my colleague about her passion; I have to congratulate her on that. I don't agree with all of the things that she has said in debate here today.

In particular, I would like to say a few things about the patient ombudsman and the role of the patient ombudsman. She talked about systemic problems and the larger exposure of things that exist in our health care system, which, actually, in question period, we do every day, and in debate we do every day here. We have some role and responsibility in oversight.

There is also a very important part of an ombudsman's role that has to deal with people's specific issues and problems inside, in this case, a hospital, a community care access centre or a long-term-care facility. I, myself, believe—and many of us know this from our offices—that the thing we can do most immediately to correct a situation, to help a person, to help an individual with a problem that they have, is the best thing for us to do. There are challenges with everything that we do in government. It's very difficult to get everything right all the time, and I would argue that I believe that this patient ombudsman will be effective and will be able to address people's individual problems inside a very large, big, complicated system.

Again, I appreciate the member's remarks and the ability to respond to her.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. We return to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for her reply.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. He raised the past around budgets. Of course, I will respectfully remind him that they said no to budgets before they even read the budgets. We came to this House; we tried to make things better, which is what we're actually trying to do. That's what this debate is supposed to be about.

I will say to the member from Etobicoke North, who took great exception with the description of the privatization of colonoscopies: The research is out there and the evidence is very clear. Presidents of hospitals are now calling them Scopes "R" Us. There is definitely a lack of quality to those procedures, which I think we should all have a shared concern about.

The member from Ottawa South raises an interesting point. Yes, of course it's important for a patient to have an avenue to express their frustration and to complain, but imagine how frustrating it would be for that patient to then realize that the person they complained to doesn't have the power to actually change anything.

That's the point about this piece of legislation: that it is, by and large, window dressing. It's not effective. It's insufficient. In many respects, it's entirely misguided or, even worse, self-serving. If you're going to craft a piece

of legislation—and there are 11 different schedules in this bill—at least make an effort to actually try to do some good with it.

The patient ombudsman has great weaknesses, and I've already listed those, but on the children's provincial advocate: This is something that's doable. I realize that there are some costs associated with doing the right thing around this legislation; perhaps this all comes under the guise of page 244 of the budget, which says that this government is going to reduce every ministry except for education, children and social services, health, and justice by 6%. Mike Harris cut those budgets by 5% and he was vilified

So that's the context and that's the issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate.

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's my pleasure today not only to rise to speak to Bill 8, but I'd also like to make some remarks, as I have not yet made my maiden speech here. Like the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I've had two elections and haven't had a chance to say a few things about my community. In order to be accountable to them, I would like to say a few words, and I ask for your—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Indulgence.

**Mr. John Fraser:**—indulgence to do that. I will stay on topic. I do want to speak about this bill, but I would like to get this out of the way so that I won't be thinking about it anymore.

I would simply like to begin by thanking the people of Ottawa South for giving me their confidence twice in 10 months. I am proud to represent our community. It is an honour and a privilege, and I commit to them to work hard for them in our community and here at Queen's Park.

Ottawa South is a beautiful, diverse and welcoming place. Its people have come from all over the world—over 140 countries—to raise their families; in our 46 schools, there are 80 languages that are spoken. We are a model for the world.

We have a beautiful community, with beautiful green space like Hog's Back Park, Vincent Massey Park and Grasshopper Hill. The historic Rideau River runs through Ottawa South.

Our community is home to world-class health care, like the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, the General and Riverside campuses of the Ottawa Hospital, Ottawa's regional cancer centre, the University of Ottawa med school, CHEO's and Ottawa Hospital's research institutes, Roger's House, Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre, and St. Patrick's Home. There's a wealth of health care in our community, and we're so very fortunate.

It's a very special place, and it's a place I've called home my entire life. In order to be accountable, I'd like to say a few words about my family. I was born in Ottawa South; I went to school there; I got my first job there; and I met my wife, Linda, there. We raised our three children—Kirsten, John and James—there, and

now they are starting their own families in Ottawa South. We're expecting our first grandchild early next year, and just recently discovered that there will be another one to follow after. I consider myself to be very fortunate.

Linda and I met when we were in high school, and we've been together since then. She has always been there for me. She's patient, kind and fiercely partisan—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** And beautiful.

**Mr. John Fraser:**—much more so than I—and I would not be standing here without her support.

Our three children—Kirsten, John and James—continue to be what I am most proud of in my life. My dad always said that the next generation is an improvement on the one—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Didn't you do your maiden speech in the last round?

**Mr. John Fraser:** No, I didn't. I never got a chance. The first speech—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm sorry to have to interrupt, because I appreciate what you're saying, but I am compelled to remind the member that we're discussing Bill 8. He has got to bring his comments back to Bill 8.

**Interjection:** He wants to be transparent about his family, Speaker. Come on.

1520

**Mr. John Fraser:** Okay, I'm being transparent about my family. If that's how we—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak on the bill. I will ask for unanimous consent to do that, but if we can't get that then we'll have to—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South, I think, is seeking unanimous consent to give, in effect, a maiden speech and provide some personal comments. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'll be very short.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'll talk about the bill, thank you very much. I appreciate your comments and your generosity and good spirit.

My dad always said the next generation is an improvement on the one that came before. He was certainly right in their case. My dad, Jack, passed away last April. I was very happy that he was able to see me elected in my first campaign, and it was very hard to be without him in the second campaign. He was a boundless source of grace and kindness who taught me how to think critically and about the importance of communicating clearly and using words with precision, which apparently I'm still working on.

My mother, Mary, a nurse, taught me by example about hard work, perseverance and faith. She's our family's rock.

My sisters—Missy, Stephanie and Cara—I can't thank enough for the friendship and support they have given me, despite incessant teasing. I'm very thankful to their families for allowing them to help me over the last several years.



To my other parents, Lorne and Yvonne, my in-laws, I thank them for their love and support and of course, for Linda—also for tuning in every day to Queen's Park. It's good to know that at least somebody back home is listening.

To my nieces and nephews, Alexandra, Alan, Isaac, Rebekka and Maeve: Thanks for all your hard work on both campaigns.

To my campaign managers, Jackie Choquette and Lauren Kennedy: You're great leaders. I was lucky to have you.

I have wonderful staff—Elise, Jeff, Fadi, Ally, Jason and Emmaline—whose hard work our community is well served by.

I would be here for the rest of the afternoon if I was to name all the people who helped me in both campaigns. Thank you for your trust and confidence.

The Ottawa South seat has been occupied by a number of people with tremendous records in public service, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention them.

My predecessor, Dalton McGuinty, served the people of Ottawa South with distinction for 23 years. I had the privilege of working with him in our community for 14 years. I learned first-hand what public service is all about, and many other lessons that are invaluable today.

Before him came his father. Although his time was short, his eloquence, passion and wit left his mark here. Before him came Claude Bennett, who served the community for 16 years. Although our politics are very different, his service to our community is to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, I think that was all of seven minutes. Now I'm pleased to speak to Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. As members have mentioned, it is a very broad bill. It has 11 schedules, and it goes across government. This bill will make Ontario a leader in open government, and I'm very proud that my first private member's bill, the Transparency in Members' Expenses Act, is part of this bill.

I put forward my bill in my third week in this Legislature, and it was a really interesting way to get to meet all of my new colleagues. I felt strongly that, as members, we should be prepared to do those things that we were going to ask others to do; it is about leading by example. I believe that the inclusion of MPP expense disclosure is an important part of this bill.

As I have said, Mr. Speaker, this bill is broad-ranging—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** You lost friends over that.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I lost a few friends, yes. Well, not really. I think all of us here in the Legislature know that we are accountable to the people who elect us. I truly believe that there is a tremendous amount of good will in here. I've had the opportunity to be here for just about a year and have been on different committees and got to work with most members here. I do take to heart and believe all members when they say—I know they don't agree with all parts of this bill, but they say, "We do want to be more transparent. We want to be more accountable," because that's what people expect. I don't know if

there are any real estate agents or families of real estate agents here, but their mantra is: "disclose, disclose, disclose." When all things are out there in the open, then I think it's fair for everybody, and things, I would argue, are much easier.

One of things this bill does is, it strengthens oversight into air ambulance. In the interests of disclosure, I want to say that my name is on that report as a member of the public accounts committee. My contribution was two subs in the last session towards that in report writing, although I have to admit, to be transparent, I really didn't add anything. It's a very good report. A lot of hard work went into that report. Being exposed, as a sub, to that was to see the kind of work we do together. We're talking about transparency and accountability because that's what we do in here. That's what we do in committee.

In the interests of disclosing again, my name is on the aggregates report. I, again, came in at report writing time, and I just wanted to make sure that I got that out as well.

As we were talking about earlier, it also creates a patient ombudsman. We have a large—it's half of what we do in terms of the money that we spend—very complicated system that involves people. I very strongly believe that it is a unique role. As I said in response to the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, I really believe in the efforts to help individuals with their challenges with government or inside large, complex organizations; it's very important work.

As members, we know that we do some of that work right now. We know that we all get calls about things in the health care system, like community care access centres; things that happen in long-term-care facilities. We know that sometimes people don't know who they can turn to when they have a problem. One of the mantras we have at the office, and I put in all our advertising, is: "We're here to help. If you have a question, if you have a problem and you don't know who takes care of it—I don't care what it is, just call us. We'll help you figure it out."

I believe that a patient ombudsman is a very important step to ensuring that people know where they can go. I know that some hospitals have their own patient advocates, and I think they do good work. I think, however, that it's important, to have consistency across the system, that we have this patient ombudsman.

It also expands the role and powers of the Integrity Commissioner not only of course with regard to MPP expenses but also with cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their respective staff. Until now, cabinet ministers and parliamentary assistants and opposition leaders—all of that was voluntary. This will put this into legislation.

It will also give the Integrity Commissioner the opportunity to review a greater number of agencies in terms of their expenses. I think this is very important. People want a transparent and open government. Going back to my private member's bill, I believe we have to lead by example and, again, it's important that that's in the bill. It will also give her more registrar-like powers over lobby-

ists. That's very important. That's a very big concern in the public domain, that people aren't seen as having undue influence on the decisions that we make here.

Of course, it expands the powers of the Ombudsman to school boards, municipalities and publicly assisted universities. The Ombudsman has, of course, graciously accepted and wanted those responsibilities, and I'm pleased that we're doing that as well too.

**1530**

The member from Kitchener–Waterloo was speaking about the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. I heard her comments—and that's why we have debate. I look forward to continued debate on this.

Legislation is something that we all work on together. I know we have differences of opinion, and sometimes when we don't get our way, then it's a process. I think the process here has worked for a great number of years, and I look forward to discussing those parts of the bill as we go further in debate.

Of course, there's also the broader public sector and developing a framework around executive compensation—a significant problem for us, obviously, as a government that's looking at financial restraint; making sure that things are fair and equitable and that we have some control over our expenses, especially when it comes to that. It will also require the broader public service and many more agencies to disclose their business plans and other relevant financial information.

Mr. Speaker, we all come here to represent our communities. I really appreciate all of my colleagues giving me the opportunity to say a few words about my community. It was important, so now I can put that aside, and it's done. I really do very much appreciate that, and I know it is out of the norm.

I would like to finish by saying that I really do believe this is an important piece of legislation. I know it has a lot of schedules. I know it covers a lot of government and will require some debate. I do believe it's more than a public relations exercise, as the member from Kitchener–Waterloo described it. I don't think anyone in here lets anyone forget anything else, at least in my limited experience here. I believe it is a genuine effort to improve the transparency and accountability of our government, to make us a leader.

I look forward to continued debate this afternoon.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence.

I'm very proud of where I come from. I'm very fortunate and I'm very lucky, as I'm sure most members here feel about their communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure to rise and comment a little bit on Bill 8 today and of course make some comments on the member from Ottawa South. It's always nice to hear a little bit about the members' own ridings and about their election experiences. I'm sure it all ties in with Bill 8; as far as I was concerned, it did, anyway.

It's always interesting to hear a little bit about their perspective—because that's how all of us got here: through friends and family. We wouldn't be able to serve without friends and family in an ongoing business.

As far as the bill, Mr. Speaker, we support this, with recommendations for amendments, of course. We feel that there are always opportunities for improvement. I've been involved in some bills since I've been here, and those that I moved forward were certainly improved through amendments at committee. We see this as the same case, as well.

Our biggest concern with this bill is that it was never costed as far as any savings or expenditures to implement this bill. We have a big fear that the administration, the public service will grow because of this. That's a big concern. We won't see any cost savings if that happens.

Ethics, as we all know, can't be legislated. That's something you either have or you don't. Unfortunately, there have been experiences in the last years with this government—by the public service and by the government itself—where there have been opportunities to make the right decisions, but they didn't make those, so we have had Ornge and eHealth, along with a number of things. Will this transparency bill solve that? I don't think so, not alone. Ethics and integrity are something you do when no one's watching.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It's a pleasure to stand and make a few comments on words just uttered by my friend from Ottawa South, otherwise known as Linda Fraser's husband, soon to be known as pipi or zedo or grandpa or papi. His life is about to change, and change it will, because the first time the grandbaby gets that smile and the eyes start to twinkle and pipi or papi comes over, bang! The heart bursts with pride, family takes on new meaning, and the stuff that we do here in the House gets relegated to the back burner. So, John, you're in for good times ahead, sir.

It was a pleasure to hear him talk about his riding and about his achievements in Ottawa South. I know he used to work for former Premier McGuinty. It was a pleasure to hear the former Premier's name mentioned in the House, because seldom do we hear it these days. As you know, it's "the former Premier," or "the government formerly led by somebody else," not Mrs. Wynne.

Anyway, I welcome his inaugural address. I had to make mine during debate on the EllisDon bill, which I know we all remember well, here on this side of the House, anyway, which had its ups and downs for the government of the day.

His comments on Bill 8: I know he knows that we will disagree to some extent. I think his heart is in the right place, and he always speaks from his heart. He believes that it is about accountability and transparency. We have some issues with that and hope to bring those to the attention of all those who are listening. So thank you, sir, and thank you, Speaker, for your time today.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The Attorney General.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak on Bill 8 today. But before I do that, I would like to pay tribute to my colleague from Ottawa South.

I've been following the career of this fine gentleman and he never ceases to amaze me. He's a very generous man. He has a lovely family, and I told him he forgot to say that he has a beautiful wife. Linda was always there for him; she's a big supporter. And he has three lovely kids. I went door to door with him in his riding, and you know what? I was kind of jealous—I don't know if it's the right term, but to see him—

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Envious.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Envious, yes; that's the better word. Envious. Because these two beautiful boys—one of them was his son-in-law and the other one was his own boy—were knocking at doors saying, "I am John's son," or "I am Mr. Fraser's son-in-law." They had this energy that you'd bring to the position. I was amazed. And then the two sisters—he is one boy with two sisters, and the sisters had nothing but praise for and they were so proud of their brother. So I think that Ottawa South is very, very well served, very well represented.

Ottawa South was always well represented, and John said it. It doesn't matter which stripe the MPP was holding. Dalton McGuinty was a great leader and I'm very proud to have served under him.

Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I also enjoyed the presentation by the member from Ottawa South. I especially enjoyed the first part, talking about family and his part of Ottawa. I'm going to have to visit—was it Grasshopper Hill? Grasshopper Hill.

1540

I do spend a bit of time in the member's riding. My son is a constituent. I don't know what young people do in Ottawa at night, but I have got two grandchildren who just arrived in the last couple of years. Maybe there's not much else to do in the nation's capital. I don't know whether my son votes for the member or not. He works for the federal government. You never know.

One thing was pointed out to me: The member for Ottawa South, from this distance, has the same tie on as the member for Leeds–Grenville. It must be an eastern Ontario thing. I suppose that so many people work for government in the city of Ottawa that there probably is a tie factory there, and a suit factory, to outfit our civil servants.

The member did get down to business with respect to Bill 8 after he very successfully got our attention, and talked about MPP expenses and cabinet ministers' expenses and parliamentary assistants' expenses. I don't know how much impact that's going to have on a budget of \$130 billion a year. I don't know whether that's going

to help out very much as far as a projected debt four years hence of \$411.4 billion, but I will say: It's a start.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments.

I return to the member for Ottawa South for his reply.

**Mr. John Fraser:** There is some secret significance behind the shared ties today, but I'm not going to disclose it.

I'd like to thank the members from Sarnia–Lambton and Windsor–Tecumseh, the Attorney General for her kind remarks, and the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I've already said a few things about the bill. What I simply want to say right now is that, again, I appreciate very much all of your kindness and generosity in letting me say a few words.

I really do love being here. Being born in a minority Parliament, now we're in the majority—there's obviously a difference, but it was interesting to come here. I'd never actually spent a lot of time in here. The one thing I learned that I didn't know coming in: Before you get here, you own your life and your schedule and you can run the show. But when you're here, people like the member directly across from me make sure that your life is organized in a certain way. I would like to thank him, too, for his generosity as a House leader. I know that he wasn't inclined to let me go on, but it was very kind of him to do that.

Again, I support this bill wholeheartedly. Yes, there are some things that we can do as we go forward and debate and go to committee. The great thing about this place is that there are 107 minds here. There are 107 people, multiplied by the people who work for us, multiplied by the people who work in government, who think about the things that are challenges for our province. In here, we try to put that all together, I think successfully. Some people might argue that we don't.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak today, Mr. Speaker, and to all of my colleagues for their generosity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to start off by congratulating the member from Ottawa South. It's always a pleasure to do your maiden speech. Particularly I can refer to this: It's nice to see him doing it before his third year, like I did mine, Mr. Speaker. To the member, I'm glad you learned from me and got that on the record. Your family will be proud of you, and you will be proud of yourself when you go back and look at this later. So thank you very much. I thought you should have taken all of your time to talk about your maiden speech, to be honest.

As I said earlier, in my two-minute reply, Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act—I think there are pieces of this that I like and I certainly welcome, but I do think there needs to be a lot more discussion and lot more debate and a lot more fulsome thought into what the ramifications of a bill like this are.

I do, though, want to start off by saying how ironic I find it today that we stand here debating the MPP transparency act at the same time that this government is facing a string of scandals like Ornge, the \$1.2-billion gas plant scandal and, most recently, the multi-million-dollar MaRS office tower scandal. How can you talk and bring in a bill about accountability and transparency in the actions that have spoken louder than words in the three years that I have been here?

Last week, we heard the Liberals refusing to allow Peter Faist and Laura Miller to appear before the justice committee in order to allow that committee to complete its work on the gas plants scandal. More importantly, for the people of Ontario to hear the real truth, to hear honestly what happened during that whole process—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to interrupt the member and remind all members of the House that the remarks have to be relevant to Bill 8. I would ask the member to bring his comments back to Bill 8.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do believe they are relevant from the perspective of transparency and accountability. I believe that transparency and accountability first and foremost are something we have to be front and centre with. We have to show action with our words and we have to ensure that when we stand in front of the people of Ontario, who truly are our court and our judge, we need to be doing that.

Today, we heard the Premier refusing to hold her Deputy Premier to ministerial standards and seek her resignation over the serious and fatal mismanagement of Ornge. How can you say, “I’m accountable, I’m transparent and I’m going to speak up and be transparent” when they deny those types of things? It certainly is putting to the test the public tolerance for ethical controversy. We need to ensure that if this act is going to be put in, they’re truly going to be more than hollow words, like many pieces of legislation the Liberals have brought forward in my three years, and ensure that this legislation is going to serve the people of Ontario fully.

I’m going to start off my remarks a little bit by talking about the concern I have that the Treasury Board President has not costed savings or expenditures for this bill. What are the ramifications if this is enacted? What are the impacts going to be for the people of Ontario? What are the fallout ramifications and maybe unintended consequences going to be, as we have so often when these things are rushed out?

It doesn’t surprise me in some ways. There are 16 actual acts that will be affected by this piece of legislation. It is an omnibus bill. When you have that much legislation being discussed in one bill, trying to be rolled through one bill, it really worries me, particularly with the track record of this Liberal government over the last dozen years on transparency and accountability and the things they have been able to sneak through. They try to put a lot of things into a bill, hoping that, maybe, we aren’t paying attention; we’re not going to catch all the nuances. But that is the job of the opposition and, of

course, my colleagues in the third party: to ensure we read every single word of these bills. We think about them and we start to wonder, “What will happen if this is enacted? What are the ramifications? What are the things that are really going to impact the people on the front lines?”

Mr. Speaker, it concerns me because they’ve done other acts similarly to this, where they’ve rammed them through very quickly and they’ve tried to ensure that the headline sounds good to the people of Ontario without really thinking of what the consequences are and what those implications are going to be down the road. Again, they’ve run a deficit. My colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk just referenced that by the end of this term, they will have a deficit and a debt of \$411 billion. I’m very concerned that a bill like this may be adding to that burden. What is going to be the cost to the taxpayers of Ontario who are paying the freight for all of us?

One of the concerns we have on this side that I need to have addressed before I would ever be able to vote in good conscience is that it’s likely that they are going to actually expand the bureaucracy, and another tower is going to be set up in a silo that is going to be unto itself, building another fiefdom. We see that way too often. We have concerns that there are towers being built in isolation that are building more and more jobs to shuffle paper.

The people of Ontario deserve front-line care and services; we’re seeing less and less. In my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, we’re seeing less and less. Just a week ago, I stood in this House and shared with the people of Ontario that 60 people had their hydro disconnected just before we head into the winter season. That’s deplorable.

Part of that is because of the billions of dollars this government has wasted and continues to waste on scandals and things that are not providing benefit to the people of Ontario. When I see legislation like this talking about creating yet another whole bureaucracy, it worries me—not that there isn’t merit in some of the pieces that they want, but is there not a way we can do it with the existing public service? Is there not a way we can do it without creating yet another whole office of this magnitude that may, at the end of the day, truly force more paper shuffling and more accountability from the report writing? Businesses out there are telling me every day that the Liberal government has put in tremendous amounts of bureaucracy—unintended, uncontrollable legislation that is really preventing them from doing their jobs.

I want to make sure I stress in all of this that ethics cannot be legislated. Just because someone says, “I have a piece of paper and a document” does not mean that people are going to do the right thing, or do what is in the best interests of the people of Ontario. So I’m a little concerned that by just saying we’re going to put in this act—which again, from what I said earlier, is actually going to have an effect on 16 different pieces of existing legislation—that our world is going to be solved. I think what we want to see is action from this side of the House. We



want to ensure that the government actually stands up and walks the talk, truly, to do that. The Liberals have put accountability measures in place before and still, just as recently as the last couple of weeks again—we've experienced eHealth, Ornge, gas plants, and now the MaRS scandal. Putting a document in place isn't necessarily going to do that.

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I will give them credit for trying to bring pieces of legislation through, if they're going to actually start to address some of those concerns. But we need to ensure that the actual legislation, at the end of the day, is fulsome, has had good debate and had a lot of input.

My colleague Garfield Dunlop from Simcoe North appeared earlier about Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, for which they've actually taken the ability to debate away from us. They're not going to go out and tour the province, they're not going to ensure that the people of Ontario have a say, yet they're talking transparency. I'm a little conflicted. A little bit of hypocrisy, I believe, comes into my mind when I hear them talking about transparency and accountability, and they won't do those types of things.

There are 16 acts, which they're trying to put into one, that are going to be impacted. How do we make sure that those acts are not going to have unintended consequences? There is a schedule within the act, amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It says that the bill will ensure that there are measures in place to preserve the records in their institution in accordance with applicable laws, rules and policies. The second point of that schedule says that concealing, destroying or altering a record with the intention of denying the right under the act will be an offence.

I laud the intent, but it's a little challenging for me to really take it to heart when this government destroyed records under the gas plants scandal.

I have to put it on the record one more time: We, as the opposition, tried to bring Peter Faist and Laura Miller to the committee to be able to bring the true facts to the people of Ontario so we could truly get to the bottom of that. That is something we should still be debating in this House, as opposed to bringing in new legislation to try to address what they have not addressed, and that truly is their own backyard, their own accountability and transparency.

It saddens me that we would actually—I've sat through, seen that there were documents destroyed. That's unprecedented in the history of our great province. Again, a piece of legislation isn't going to stop that. Doing the right thing, having leadership that actually admonishes that and actually takes action to ensure that that will not happen and that if it does, takes action to ensure that the people who were involved actually have punishment provided to them—that is a way to deter this happening in the future.

A piece of legislation is only that. It's only a piece of paper that people can read and choose whether they're going to actually abide by. You shouldn't need legislation for things like that. It's a sad day in Ontario that—again, we tried to push that on behalf of the opposition. That is our role, on behalf of the people of Ontario: to get to the truth to ensure that the people who are going to be impacted most by that billion-dollar boondoggle—that billion dollars that was wasted that's not going to the front line of health care, that's not going to the front line of education, that's not going to the front line of the social services sector that I represent as a critic.

Almost on a weekly basis, I have people in to my office who are concerned with the programs and services that they're not getting. Just last week in the riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I was advised that our victims services are going to be cut a significant amount, and yet they're mandated to provide that service. They've actually increased the fees to the victim services fund, yet there's less money coming to ridings like Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and a lot of my colleagues' across the province.

So it's a little bit hard, when I see legislation, to really, truly believe they're doing it with all of the best intent. The words ring hollow because of the actions that I've lived through in my three years here in this great Legislature.

Another schedule in there is the amendments to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007. It says in here, "The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007, is amended to add new investigative powers to the advocate. The advocate would be able to appoint a director of investigations."

"After the investigation, the advocate would make a report, provide the report to the person or organization it makes recommendations to, make the report public and, in some cases, send a copy to the Premier and make a report to the Legislative Assembly."

I'm concerned why that would be "in some cases." The Premier is the leader. That person should be getting every report—they should—so that they can't say, "Oh, I didn't know. It didn't come through my office." I can't understand why that would be put in there, this "in some cases."

I certainly would want to hear a lot more dialogue on what that means. I can't believe that a report of that nature, that is talking about children and youth, the vulnerability and the lack of things they may be receiving if we are not doing our jobs as well as we can, would not come to this Legislature. That is what we're here for. We are elected to represent the people, to ensure that we're looking at legislation that is going to benefit all the great people of Ontario, particularly our children and youth.

Those pages who sit in front of you and across this great Legislature and have the opportunity to come and serve—it's been great to have them here, by the way; I'm sad that it's their last week. I'm going to miss all of them. They've done a wonderful job here in the Legislature, as have all the pages in my time of three years, providing

great service. I think it's a great experience for them to witness and be part of democracy. And who knows? Many of them may be sitting in these seats a few short years away.

I really have a question. I can't understand why you would put in "and in some cases." That says to me that you're not truly wanting to be fully open and transparent, because perhaps you're going to choose which ones actually get to the Premier and perhaps to the Legislature and perhaps, by that very virtue, to the public. It hearkens back again to why the gas plants have been covered up, why that information has not been truly delivered in front of us. Things in the Ornge report: Again, I'm concerned that we're just trying to move on from there and pretend it didn't happen. We've put a lot of actions in place and the world is rosy now. Well, it's not, Mr. Speaker. Four people lost their lives.

My former colleague Frank Klees and I spoke on the weekend in regard to the Ornge report. Again, we talked about transparency and accountability, and the concern we share is that if the government does not take that report and truly put actions in place, they are absolving themselves from the true concern that is there—very transfer agency there. If we don't implement the reports that were, by the way, all-committee reports—that's where that report came from. All the committee unanimously supported that. If this government does not step up and do the honourable thing, do the right thing and implement those recommendations, there's nothing stopping Ornges from happening continuously across this great province, again to the detriment of our society and to those front-line services I hold near and dear.

I hope the folks at home and here in the Legislature, particularly the Liberals, are listening, to understand that we do have some concerns with parts of this legislation from that perspective. We need open and transparent communication so we can actually understand what that truly means. It really baffles me that you would say, "In some cases, we'll need to bring it to the Premier, and in some cases, we'll need to bring it to the Legislature." All of those types of things, particularly work that's done on behalf of children and youth by the provincial advocate—I believe, in my former critic role, I had a great opportunity to learn more about the role of the provincial advocate and what they do in their mandate to serve the children and youth of our province. It's great to see them able to have that ability and be even more hands on, if you will, in protecting our children and youth. But I think we need to understand why it would not be that every single incident should be going to—so the Premier cannot say, "It never got to me. I didn't know about it." We've heard that on the gas plants: "Well, it didn't personally get to me." Well, you were in cabinet. "It didn't get to me, personally, as Premier." Well, it came through your office.

In the Ornge concerns that I raised this morning, a number of things were brought to the Minister of Health and her senior bureaucrats, to her ministry, and again turned a blind eye to, and they hide behind that by

saying, "Well, I didn't see that letter. I didn't read that report." That's your job. As a cabinet minister, you have to be responsible. Whether you saw it or not, it's your ministry that has to be responsible.

Speaker, I'm going to move on to another one, the amendments to the public sector expense review. The bill is a compilation of amendments aimed at broadly increasing transparency. It increases the ability of the government to investigate the broader public service. The bill addresses the production of government records and documents to address the deletion of emails in the former Premier's office. There is an indictment that at least they've acknowledged what we've been saying all along, as the opposition, that this gas plant scandal, the worst in our province's history, unless MaRS becomes even worse—it's in a long line. We had eHealth, we had Ornge, we've got the gas plants. But what we're concerned with is that there were deletions.

The OPP, I believe, are still investigating that. I think that at some point what we, as the opposition, will be doing is asking for a status update from the OPP to see just where that—again, we don't want that to just kind of get swept under the rug. I believe many people on the opposite side are hoping this thing just goes away; they need to move on. They're trying to bring other bills in to take that off the forefront, Mr. Speaker, and we're not going to allow that. Because the people in my riding certainly ask me continually, "Whatever happened with that? Did we ever get to the truth? Did we really find out how that happened?" And equally importantly—not more importantly, but equally importantly—what are we doing to address that that can never happen again?

People in my riding, regardless of their political stripe, have said to me, "Bill, I can't believe that the government would actually delete information of such critical importance and there have been no repercussions." I don't believe anyone has lost a job over it. I don't believe anyone has even really been called on the carpet. I certainly do not believe, from anything I have been able to see in the House, that there has even been anything put in to ensure that that's prevented. Really, no one on that side of the House has truly stepped up and even said, "Sorry," to the people of Ontario. "We made an error—someone in our employ did."

**1600**

Again, we have been trying to get Laura Miller and Peter Faist, the two people we believe have the most hands-on, pertinent knowledge of that whole issue, to come forward and, under oath, tell us truly what happened. The only way we can put measures in place to ensure those types of things and that we truly have accountability and transparency is to bring those people in who have the knowledge, those people who were part of that process, those people who can tell us the absolute, undivided truth with no spin involved, no political machinations, to tell us what happened so that we can put measures in place. That's the job that we, as opposition and the third party, I believe, are entrusted by the people of Ontario to do.



Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, on behalf of my colleagues in the PC caucus, that we will not let this go. We will not let it be swept under the rug, because \$1 billion was wasted that is not going to front-line care, to those people who need social services. As I said earlier, because of the energy rates that are the highest in North America under this government—they've allowed our rates to escalate—they're driving manufacturing out of our province. We've lost 300,000 jobs. We're losing more and more businesses. The rates just went up again, increased on the Saturday of this past weekend, making them the highest rates in this great continent of North America.

When we're talking about accountability and transparency, we need to really be able to believe that the party opposite is truly going to make a change. Right now, they're still going down the same path. They're not acknowledging the Green Energy Act. Transparency and accountability come up there. They've taken away the ability for local municipalities, like those in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across most of rural Ontario, to say, "We want a say. We don't want those turbines in our area." They have no right or ability, and the government just keeps snowplowing right past them and expediting to ensure that there's more of that.

When I hear the words "transparency and accountability act" from members opposite, I really have to challenge whether they're truly going to make a change, whether they're truly going to make a difference. I say it over and over again: A piece of legislation and a piece of paper do not change how people act; the principles they abide by—standing up under their leadership and saying, "We will address this. We will make people accountable. We will make sure that everything that happens is transparent and we can see it."

It's troubling for me when I see a piece of legislation like this brought out. When I've asked directly to the Premier and to cabinet ministers for very specific pieces of information, asking them a question here in this House, in front of the people of Ontario, I don't get anything other than a shuffle of the question and saying, "Let's move on. That's history."

As I've said before, I have very big concerns with a lot of this. One thing I do like in there is that the bill would provide whistleblower protection for persons who disclose information to an inspector, investigator, special investigator or the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. I really like that it's in there. It rings a bit hollow because we had whistleblowers come out within the Ornge concern. They brought things directly to our former member, Frank Klees, from Newmarket-Aurora, and nothing was done with that by this government opposite. They again just sloughed it off under the carpet, just tried to move on and said, "We've made changes. We've changed the board." You might have changed the people in the chairs; you didn't change the culture. You didn't change the ability for those people to step up and truly do the right thing. At the end of the day, what I still have not heard is one single acknowledgment of any

wrongdoing by that government, and we know there is, Mr. Speaker.

If you're going to bring a piece of legislation forward with transparency and accountability, stand behind it. Actions speak, as the old saying goes, much louder than words. Show us that you truly mean it, show us that you're going to be a different government and then we'll sit with you and we'll try to work on a piece of legislation that truly will serve all the people of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? The member for Windsor-Tecumseh.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you, Speaker. If I could, with your indulgence at this time, thank the great member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, not only for what he just said, but last Friday, he drove—or was it Thursday? It was Thursday. He drove down to Windsor—he talks so fast; he's an auctioneer on the side. He helped a fundraising group in Windsor, the Do Good Divas, raise \$65,000 at a charity auction, where they were auctioning off handbags and purses. They had a silent auction.

This Conservative member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound drove down to Windsor, did his auctioneering, and we raised a ton of money. I have to say, I don't know if it was because he left late or he got stuck on the highway—maybe he got a speeding ticket; I don't know. But he got there a little bit late so I had to stand in, if you will, and take my time to drag things out, and I had to auction off some of the purses myself until he got there. But he did an excellent job—so good a job, in fact, they told me not to come back next year, but they want the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound back next year. So I want to thank him for that.

I must say, I agree with a lot of what he had to say about Bill 8, because when we stand in this House and we hear "transparency and accountability," we expect that's what we're going to see.

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I know that is not my phone ringing. I don't know where it's ringing, but it must be on the other side of the House, a certain cabinet minister in the back row, perhaps. Oh, too bad. Too bad for that member from Peterborough, not to mention any names. The ringtone was very accountable in that case, very transparent about where it came from.

Thank you, Speaker, for your time and your indulgence.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's a pleasure to take a couple of minutes to talk about Bill 8 in regards to the comments from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I'm not going to talk about anything specific in what he said, but just a general theme.

The theme is that this is an omnibus bill and we're rushing it through. It's amazing, because the House leader from the opposition was in municipal government when the previous Conservative government did omnibus bills every day. That happened all the time.

They talk about consultation and the lack of consultation. I remember when municipalities ran to hide from the fact because they were imposed amalgamations and imposed downloading. They talk about how we're not transparent and we're trying to rush things through. They were the godfather of those kinds of things. I was in municipal government when that happened.

They talk about making decisions that cost Ontarians money. Let's talk about the 407, a fire sale that nobody knew about until it happened. I know what it costs me the odd time I take it.

So they talk about things that this government is doing. Well, you know, we talk about lack of consultation. That's why we're here as members, 107 members that reach out to our communities and bring that input here. So the fact of landing in different communities, yes, is very important, but for every single item, I'm not sure that—if we have to go there, then we're not doing our job here, because I know I meet with constituents every week.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I just want to thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for his comments. I listened to his entire speech. I liked the tone, quite frankly. He spoke about the fact that we need more discussion and more debate.

Again, with this government, they say one thing and then they do something completely different. I appreciate the fact that the member brought up things like eHealth, Ornge, the gas plants, and the MaRS issue as well, because time after time, the government says that they're going to do something and then they do something completely different. That's what they've done with this bill.

Talking about openness and transparency always gets them the headline. You look into the throne speech, and time after time they use those words. They make people think that they are actually going to make good on their words. In the throne speech, they talked about letting the justice committee write its report and do its work, but yet when we agreed before the election to have two final witnesses, the minute this government gets back in the chamber, they forget about that. When you're in a committee and you talk about the MaRS lease agreements and the committee even goes so far as to say that because of commercial sensitivity they would deal with them in camera, the government members vote against that. Time after time after time, they say one thing and do something else.

When we talk about being fair and reasonable, I think having committee hearings is part of what's been going on in this Legislature since it began. With all due respect to the previous speaker, when he wasn't in this place for the last four years, he held committee meetings throughout all of his riding. That's all we're talking about. There are some bills that need some more debate. The government should make do and allow us to do that.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I listened intently to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I didn't hear whether they were going to support it or not. There are some unpalatable parts of this legislation that I know must make them cringe—but they, in turn, also like the title. The title has some appeal for them.

What I did hear, though—and I will agree with one thing that the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound mentioned—was that there is some concern around the costing out from the Treasury Board side of the ledger. I would reference this piece of legislation. The context for me is that it falls within page 244 of the budget, which indicates that there's going to be a 6% reduction in every ministry, aside from four, going forward. So perhaps that's why—I've already shared my disdain for this piece of legislation. If you're going to write a piece of legislation, at least have it be effective, at least let it actually accomplish something and not just wrap it up in a bow that says “transparency and accountability” on top of it.

The member also, though, did mention that he lauds the intent around data protection. This obviously is an outstanding issue. It's a hangover, if you will, from the last Legislature.

We shouldn't forget that this government has moved into a privatization mode, especially around data protection. That's why you have the Guelph storage centre—\$350 million. The taxpayers of the province paid for it. It's only being used to 20% of its capacity. Instead, the government has opted to move to some consultants who are uploading data to the cloud. The cloud is less accessible, as opposed to being in a secure, government-run facility. So we are going to be watching that very carefully, as I'm sure the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** A pleasure—particularly, my colleague from Windsor-Tecumseh, thank you for the kind words. I want to pay tribute to him and his wife, Gale, and the whole team who put on the stellar event down there. They raised \$65,000 last night. That's over \$400,000 now for health care and local charities in their communities. Kudos to you, Percy. The reason I went there is because Percy is a good guy who I do trust, who I do care about, and I know that when we work together, we can accomplish great things.

It's interesting; the member from Northumberland-Quinte West—I think he has a bit of Groundhog Day. He's going back to the last time he was here, talking about the PCs. But what he doesn't ever talk about is the \$10 billion in interest that government over there is paying, which isn't going to front-line health care, isn't going to front-line education, isn't going to front-line community services. That government over there is going to have a \$411-billion accumulated debt.



I'm going to ask you for transparency and accountability. If you do not slay that debt by the time the next election comes, will every single one of you resign your seat, that day?

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Leeds–Grenville stepped up, and what he said, I think, really resonates in here. What he said is that we continually hear, in a number of pieces of legislation in the last few days we've been debating—and it's a trend that I've seen throughout my three years—the Liberals, sadly, come out and say one thing, and then do the exact opposite. They say they want accountability and transparency, but they bring in the Green Energy Act, which takes away every democratic right of local municipalities and residents, the voters, to have a say on whether they want wind turbines in their area.

We just had Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. Again, they've now used time allocation to zip that through, ram it down our throats. They don't want to have consultation or a dog-and-pony show across the province.

What he's saying is absolutely true: You can't bring out a transparency and accountability act, a piece of paper that says those two words, and then do those types of things: not allow witnesses to come forward and actually be brought in front of a committee to have their say. They cannot do that.

Again, back to Ornge: They cannot come out and have a report and then not implement the actions for the benefit of people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** As always, it's an honour to stand here and represent the constituents in the town of Tecumseh, in the city of Windsor, and bring their voices to this Legislature—one of 107 voices representing 13 million people.

Today, I guess, it's almost like a treat, not long past Halloween, to be able to stand here to make sure that the Liberals don't trick us by the wording of the bill that we're talking about here today.

Let me tell you a quick story. When I was elected August 1, a year ago, in the by-election, I was going door-to-door on the night of that election, pulling the vote. One of the last doors I knocked on was a woman who was a former Liberal, she told me. But she said because of all the gas plant scandals and all the mess that was going on, she thought the Liberals had lost their credibility, that they had lost their integrity, and she couldn't vote for them, but she would vote for me on one condition: that I would go down to Queen's Park and not forget where I came from and always maintain my integrity. That's what I'm trying to do. When I come here, I want to speak with integrity. I want to raise issues of credibility. I believe in transparency, and I believe that what we see in front of us today has very little to do with transparency or integrity or much of anything else.

I can understand the need for the Liberals to want to change the channel, to put a different spin on things,

because—with all due respect to the previous government—they went through a lot. They had the Ornge scandal. They had the gas plant scandal. They had the eHealth. Now this new government is having the MaRS scandal. There's a lot on the plate. When you don't want people talking about that which does not bring you respect, you try to change the channel, you put a different spin on it. With all due respect, I think we're seeing some smoke and mirrors here.

But, before I get into it, let me say right off the top, New Democrats on this side of the House firmly believe in accountability. We firmly believe in transparency. This omnibus bill lumps parts of 13 other bills or schedules together. I think I've got a list here somewhere:

- schedule 1, the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act;
- number 2, amendments to the Ambulance Act;
- amendments to the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act;
- schedule 4, amendments to the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act;
- the Excellent Care for All Act;
- schedule 6, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- schedule 7, amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act;
- the Lobbyists Registration Act is 8;
- schedule 9 is amendments to the Ombudsman Act;
- schedule 10, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act; and
- finally, schedule 11 is amendments to the Public Sector Expenses Review Act.

Now, if you look at them—and just look at parts of them and parts of the wording. For example, if you look at number 1, the wording isn't "all executives" in the broader public sector; it's "certain executives" in the broader public sector.

The Ambulance Act: If you've done any bargaining, Speaker, you know the words "may," "shall" and "will" mean quite a bit of difference at the bargaining table. So if you will do something, shall do something or you may do something—and they may appoint investigators under number 2.

Number 5—why not just let the Ontario Ombudsman jump into the investigations on health care? I mean, the office is there. The experience is there. The need is there. Why are we coming up with a pretend, a phantom investigator or ombudsman with limited power? It doesn't make a lot of sense.

Number 6 is a real doozy, Speaker. I've got to tell you: add the wording, "the wilful concealment, alteration or destruction of records as an offence." Well, Speaker—seriously. That's a little like closing the barn door after the paper shredders and the document destroyers or the drive-by hard-drive deleters have all left the Premier's office. They're all out of the building. So now we'll put the wording in there.

**1620**

You talk about a gas plant scandal, and two witnesses—only two left to go, right? I see it as we've had 90 witnesses. I keep hearing the government House leader say, "We've had 90 witnesses; that's enough. Sit down and shut up." What I'm saying is, you've had 90 warm-up acts. I want the two headliners. I want to hear what they have to say. That's what I'm paying my money for. I'm here for the main act, not the warm-up act. God help us.

These are the two who know where the bodies are buried, Speaker. They can help us follow the paper trail. These are the two we've been waiting for. There are skeletons in the closets; they know whose closets. They know whose skeletons.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I need to once again remind the House of the importance of relevance with respect to the debate. I would ask the member to bring his comments back to Bill 8.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I thought the wording "add the wilful concealment, alteration and destruction of records as an offence" would somehow tie into: Let's get back to the offence of what happened when they destroyed the documents. Let's get the people in front of us to say, "I'm sorry"—somebody should apologize—"I'm sorry, but this is what we did. And these are the reasons we did it. And these are the people who told us to do it. And this is how we did it. And boy, did we pull one over on the people and the taxpayers of Ontario." That's what I thought this bill was about: changing the channel. Switching gears. Trying to take us back to wipe the slate clean to say, "It's all better now. We're different. We're kinder and gentler." And it does sadden me somewhat to know that new members of the Legislature have voted not to call those witnesses.

When I go door to door, when I go back to Mrs. Wilhelm's door, she'll say to me, "You've retained your integrity, but I'm a little bit worried about some of those new folks up there, who won't bring those witnesses forward. What do you think about that?" I'll have to agree with her, Speaker. I'll have to agree with her.

The title of the bill, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency—otherwise known as smoke and mirrors—or, if the government members would like, let me say it: a Trojan Horse title; not what it seems to be at all.

If you're talking about accountability and transparency—you know, Speaker, if you repeat a phrase enough times, maybe some people will actually believe it. As you know, you can fool some of the people some of the time. So the more you say "accountability and transparency," some people will actually believe they mean it. Mind you, most of the people—all of the people—on this side of the room wouldn't take it to the bank.

My friend the President of the Treasury Board, who's bringing forth this motion, in her opening statement said that they were going to build on the Premier's commitment to lead the most open and transparent government in the country—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Sometimes.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Sometimes. When the timing is right. Yes. That wasn't there. I'm reading between the lines, Speaker.

Then she went on to say that "the people of Ontario have a right to know how their dollars are being spent." Well, yes. We would like to know how the dollars were spent on the cover-up of the gas plant scandal, but yet we can't get there. We can't get the final two speakers, the final two witnesses, the main act to come to the concert. They want to prevent that, Speaker. Yet they say they're accountable and it's a transparent process.

They have this funny little thing called time allocation, where they want to limit the time that we can actually stand in the House and do our job, which is to hold the government to account. They want to limit the time we can do that. Yet they say they're being accountable and they're being transparent.

I don't know. I don't get it. There are only two of them left, Speaker. Never mind four more years; how about one more day? One more day of testimony in front of a government committee made up of members from all sides of the House to ask questions and get answers from the final two witnesses. One more day. It doesn't sound like a lot to ask for. One more day. But no, if they did that, they would be accountable. They would be transparent. But no, they don't want to do it.

We know that this bill was debated previously—parts of it, anyway—as Bill 179 in the last Parliament. My colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo said in her lead statement, "This is quite an interesting piece of legislation that the other side of the House brings forward, trying to address some of the long-standing issues that the Liberal government has had and still continues to deal with." So we're not all switching the channel.

If you start to read the bill more closely, you start to consider it a little bit crafty, with a title that's somewhat deceptive in its nature, somewhat suspect, somewhat circumspect—when you put it out there that you're going to be accountable and transparent, but you're really not.

On the face of it, of course, it's difficult to argue against what seem like major reforms which would make government more accountable and transparent. I've said it before, I'll say it again: I'm all about transparency. I'm all about accountability. There are 21 of us here in the NDP caucus, and we all agree with accountability and transparency. But there's much here to be wary of, and we're taking our cues from others who say the reforms here don't go far enough, or they work as barriers to true oversight. You can't help but stand with us and say, "Yes, there's something to this smoke-and-mirrors act." We've seen it before; I'm sure we'll see it again. That's why people in Ontario voted 21 of us in, in our caucus: to hold the government to account and to expose to the taxpayers of Ontario the actions when we feel they're not doing what they said they would do; they're not being as transparent or accountable as they said they would be. They want us to believe it, but it just doesn't seem to be helping.



Let me remind the House, as I'm sure others have done, that a lot that has been proposed in this bill started out, at one time or another, on this side of the House with New Democrats. New Democrats put forth a lot of these good ideas in one way, shape or form. The Liberals are taking many of our ideas, and good luck to them. If we come up with a good idea and they run with it, more power to them—particularly where it involves long-held NDP positions on capping salaries in the broader public service and greater oversight of parts of the MUSH sector by the Ombudsman. Of course, the "H" is out of the MUSH at the moment.

The current measures to achieve these objectives within Bill 8 are not effective. They're insufficient. We need more details. Some are entirely misguided, and some need more direction—or even worse, they're self-serving. There's lots of committee work to be done, that's for sure—miles and miles to go before we sleep, if you will. There's a lot of work in front of us here.

The prospect is that the substance of the act—the real meat and potatoes, as some would say—will reside in the regulations developed after passage. We certainly look forward to that, Speaker. If you take, for example, the capping of the CEO salaries, if the province was serious about controlling costs at the executive level, it would go all-in. It would double down and adopt the NDP's call for limiting annual executive salaries to \$418,000, twice what the Premier makes. Twice what the Premier of Ontario brings in seems to me to be sufficient for somebody in a public service job. Why not? Instead of that, senior public servants, senior executives of agencies are making millions, and on top of that, they get millions more in severance if they leave. That's money that could be better spent on health care and education, on hiring more people to look after the elderly and the sick.

Some people in this province are doing well, some are doing really, really well, and then some not so well at all. When a public sector CEO takes home more in a year than an average family earns in a decade or two, people feel like their money just isn't being respected. No one likes being disrespected. No one likes an arrogant CEO. No one likes an arrogant government. It's long overdue that we bring some respect to the taxpayer, especially when costs like hydro rates are escalating out of control.

1630

Stop blowing the horn, "We're putting in caps on senior executives," because you're not. There's nothing in this bill—absolutely nothing in this bill—that talks about caps. There's nothing, nada, zilch. It's just not there. Just saying there will be at some point in the future doesn't make it so. It doesn't make it so. I don't know how many times you want to announce it, but it isn't so. It's not in here. As it stands, Bill 8 doesn't set hard caps, and the government should stop trying to convince the people of Ontario that it does.

It really boggles my mind. You're either accountable and transparent, or you're not. You either have integrity, or you don't. You either have ethics, or you don't. Let's stop the game. Let's put it in there.

I'm not entirely sold on the definition of accountability and transparency of this government or this bill. The definitions are out there, but the title of this bill just doesn't live up to it. I think it has a certain lack of substance, Speaker. It can be improved—it will be improved—at committee, I certainly hope. I believe the government has a lot of work to do when it comes to transparency and accountability. We keep seeing it all the time.

I think today in the House, it's convenience store operators day, or some wording to that effect. I met with three operators of convenience stores earlier today in my office, and they were telling me about some of the issues that they have to deal with. These are things that could be put in an omnibus bill and protected, but it hasn't happened. They represent 7,500 convenience store owners across the province.

When I met with them earlier today, they told me, for example, more enforcement of those who make and sell illegal tobacco would help. But they also talked about a more universal approach to enforcement on store clerks who are caught selling tobacco to minors. What this brings in is that some health units, which we will see will be dealt with in a certain fashion in this bill, go out of their way—if, for example, you own a convenience store and you train your staff, but two of your staff make a mistake and sell to minors over a five-year period, as the owner, you will lose your licence. You won't be able to sell tobacco anymore, and tobacco may make up 41% of your profit, sometimes more than 50%. Speaker, this bill does not address that.

But if you're the landlord of that building, after the convenience store owner leaves town because he's lost his tobacco licence, you can't even rent out that store, that space, to another convenience store owner because, for five years, there's a ban put on by the health unit. Some health units do that. That has to change. Those are some of the things that should be in an omnibus bill if we're going to correct legislation that truly needs some changes to be brought about.

I know it's hard for the people at home to keep following what goes on because we spread our debates over a number of hours and a number of days. I know others have talked about this bill; I know my colleague from Kenora-Rainy River is spot on when she said that "this bill is an attempt by this government to tilt the public perception away from that which the public presently has of" this government. That's right. There is a perception about the government that they're trying to change the channel on and switch gears to try to get people thinking they're really being transparent and accountable. In my opinion, they're not. I want to see them prove it at committee. I think it can be supported once improvements are made.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I think this House always enjoys the slow, methodical, meandering fireside chat kind of presentation of the member from Windsor-Tecumseh.

I think you've certainly earned your keep at the 5 p.m. reception of the Ontario convenience stores folks who are visiting us today. I think their issues perhaps are best dealt with elsewhere. Their main issue, it seems, incidentally, as I recall from my meeting with them, is to in fact sell alcohol and beer etc., in the local convenience store. That's a separate issue entirely, but I appreciate you—you seem to want to fold that into this omnibus bill as well.

Speaker, I have to say that this bill, named, as it is, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, with all of its various different components—you would think that various of my honourable colleagues opposite would support it. For example, my colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh said that 21 of their members were elected to hold this government to account.

Well, I would respectfully, first of all, just remind you that the Premier was asked point-blank: If she were to return to a majority government, would we move on, for example, with the justice policy committee—by the way, which I chair—to move to report writing and recommendations so that infrastructure siting would be done in a more appropriate, efficient and professional manner, or would we continue the 90-plus hearings with, by the way, more than a million documents? She was asked point-blank.

Secondly, your own honourable colleagues who lost this election in Trinity-Spadina and Beaches-East York and Davenport, I think, were really on the wrong side of that particular issue. So when you say that you've been—we always, I guess, have to cede the moral high ground to the NDP, but I have to say that this government was elected and is doing what it said it would do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to comment on my colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh, Percy Hatfield. I think he brought a lot of very valid, good and well-thought-out thoughts to the table. You know what? I see this member not as someone who's holding fireside chats and ambling along. I see him as a member who actually holds the government to account, and they don't like it.

He used examples of destruction of evidence, and he reinforced that 90 witnesses were called, and that's a good thing, but they were the warm-up act. Where were the two lead acts? Where are the two people, Peter Faist and Laura Miller, that we, as well as the NDP, have called to come before that committee and truly get to the truth?

He used the term "smoke and mirrors," which I think aptly describes accountability and transparency when it comes to the Liberal record that I've certainly seen here. It kind of reminds me—and I'm going to paraphrase a little bit from Abe Lincoln and the very credible Percy Hatfield. You can fool some of the people some of the time, some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time. I think that's coming to fruition here when we look at these types of things.

When the government brings in a bill on transparency and accountability—and again, I go back to this morning, which was a prime example. I called on the Premier to ask the former health minister for her resignation over the way she didn't handle well the Ornge fiasco, debacle, and she turned a blind eye to that. She did not even acknowledge, really, the question. In fact, the reality is that the former Minister of Health is now Treasury Board cabinet minister. In essence, that's a reward. So you've taken a file like that and you've made a complete debacle of something that is about health care, is about the fundamental thing that most people watching and listening today care about, and that's their health care—and there was nothing there. There was no accountability on that file whatsoever to change, other than again saying we've changed some of the people in the lawn chairs around the table.

Mr. Speaker, that's not accountability and transparency. They haven't allowed that report to be implemented. What they've done is said, "We've tabled it. Thank you very much."

We also had a Drummond report a number of years ago which they commissioned and didn't do many of the actions in.

So it's a little bit hollow. We need to see more, and until we do, we'll continue to debate it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** Thank you, Speaker, and through you, I appreciate the comments from my colleague and from others on this topic.

I'm new to the House, obviously, but what I've learned real quick is that you can't always judge a book by its cover. For example, we just went through a debate on fighting fraud and lowering auto insurance rates, something that the NDP have been pushing for years. What a great title, and the Liberal government saw fit to push that through limited debate. When you go through—unfortunately, a lot of people in this province won't go through the actual bill, but when you went through that, you saw that it was more about saving insurance companies money, and whether they're going to transfer those saved dollars to the policyholders, we don't know. But we saw that there was an elimination of the courts, for example, as an appeal process. There was a reduction in interest rates that insurance companies pay for claims that are won.

1640

This bill, again, sounds great. Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act: Who does not want that? We've been fighting for that forever. I fought for that at the council table. But again, the proof is in the pudding. Through debate, through public consultation, through this going through committee and not being rushed through, we, as a House, all three parties, can come up with a better bill, I believe. Hopefully, we have that full opportunity.

It's a complicated bill. I looked at it today and it's 11 schedules. I was reading each one and I got through four



or five; there was so much there. I think time has to be given to look at each schedule individually. For example, when I took a look at the compensation framework, that's a very important one. What does compensation include? Is it just salary or are we going to look at bonuses? Are we going to look at severance packages? The youth and child advocacy, that's huge.

So let's take the time. Let's look at this bill schedule by schedule and do it right. Do the people of this province proud.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I was proud to be able to speak after the minister in moving this bill and I'm proud to stand again here today. I'm proud to stand behind this bill because I think it's more than just a bill with a fancy title. I think it's a bill with a title that reflects what it aims to do, which is to increase accountability and transparency of government.

When I was knocking on doors—and I shared this story the other day and I will share it again—I heard from many of my constituents in Etobicoke Centre how important it is that government be accountable and that it be transparent. I think this bill aims to achieve just that.

The people of Etobicoke Centre and the people of all our ridings wanted that because they wanted to know how our dollars were spent. They wanted to know that we were getting value for our dollars. That's why I'm honored to be working with the President of the Treasury Board on this, who I think is committed to increasing accountability and transparency in government.

This is a signature bill. It's a broad-ranging bill, and it does a number of things to increase accountability and transparency. It enables the government to control compensation of senior executives in the broader public sector. What it allows the government to do is, it allows us to impose hard caps after obtaining the information required to determine what those hard caps should be. That's the responsible approach to instituting controlled compensation.

It expands the Ontario Ombudsman role. It requires expense information to be posted online for cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and MPPs. It requires all institutions covered by the freedom-of-information legislation to securely preserve, and prohibit, the wilful destruction of records. It gives the government greater oversight of air ambulance and service providers. It allows the government to appoint a patient ombudsman. It gives the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth ombudsman-like powers. It expands the scope of the Integrity Commissioner's review of executive expenses to all 197 classified agencies and four hydro organizations. And it provides the Integrity Commissioner with investigative powers and the ability to prohibit individuals from lobbying.

This is broad-ranging legislation. It's powerful legislation. It will increase accountability and transparency. That's what the people of Etobicoke Centre and Ontario

asked for. That's what they deserve and that's what they're going to get.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for his reply.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** If I could start with the member from Etobicoke North, the Chair of the justice committee who took a shot at the voters in Toronto and took a dig at them over—he was talking about the gas plants, and then somehow he turned it on the voters in Toronto. I don't get it. I know he's a published author. I would hope his focus on his works of mystery would be more straightforward than whatever he was meandering.

But he did mention beer and wine in corner stores. Speaker, I love it. I used to be a reporter. I went around the province with David Peterson in 1985 when he became Premier, and one of the biggest promises in his election platform was beer and wine in corner stores. Thank you for bringing that up—another broken Liberal promise. No matter where we go in this province, no matter the year, no matter the time, no matter the Premier, another broken Liberal promise. Beer and wine in corner stores: Thank you.

I'm not a Chair of a committee, but I am on the public accounts committee, and we finally released the Ornge air ambulance report. Thank you to the previous committee which did all the work on it. But it finally got out there. You know what? It's almost gone; the news cycle is almost gone. So if they would only give us two more witnesses, one more day to close out the gas plant scandal, that cycle of accountability and transparency might be gone in one more day—a couple of days after that.

But let's get serious about it. We're all in here to work together. But let's not try to pull the wool over anybody's eyes. The title of this bill is not what this bill is all about. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I think that listening to the debate this afternoon kind of reconfirmed in my mind that Bill 8 is a bit of a start. There's much more that could be done, certainly, when I reflect back on 11 years of lack of transparency and accountability in this particular government. So we do have a bit of a road to travel if we are to return governance in the province of Ontario to one of transparency and accountability—governance with measures in place to support oversight and to support management that the people expect to see within this system of democratic, responsible government.

We're debating Bill 8. It's titled the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. As I mentioned, it's the result of 11 years of many instances of a lack of transparency and a lack of accountability. I think of eHealth, OLG, Caledonia, Ornge air ambulance—just mentioned by the previous speaker—the gas plant scandals, and now we're trying to inject some transparency into what's going on with respect to the gigantic MaRS building that you can see just out the front door of this Legislative Assembly. The scandals have all been

obviously very, very costly in terms of dollars spent and certainly very costly in terms of the credibility of this government.

I think of so many transgressions by cabinet ministers over the years when they did not step down, as is customary in the system of responsible government that has served this province going back to the 1850s. I recall, in question period, there were several calls and several requests for the then Minister of Health, during the Ornge era, during the two years that many of us spent on the Ornge committee, to step down—for the minister to resign—which is a normal thing to do in the province of Ontario system of responsible government.

Addressing the bill more specifically, if you take a look at both schedule 1 and schedule 3 of the act, it puts a spotlight on the broader public sector, on accountability but also on compensation. It seems to focus primarily on cash wages. It doesn't seem to focus on other indicators of compensation—pensions, vacation time, sick time, hours of work and many other perks that draw on the taxpayers' dollar, like dental, early retirement. Even job security has a cost for those that are employed by the Ontario government.

Let's take a look at that; that's my suggestion. Transparency is important. It's important for accountability of the public sector, especially if you want to compare those who work in the public sector to those who work in the private sector. If you add up the perks, you're 30% worse off in a private sector job. I don't think that's fair. That, to me, does not suggest any concept of pay equity, for example. It's also expensive for the provincial budget.

It does become disappointing. Bill 8 only looks at those who make \$100,000 or more. This may have come from some of the NDP debate. This kind of leans more to tax-the-rich or perhaps looking at the 1%, but there are many, many people that make \$98,000 a year or \$90,000 a year—many, many people—a significant draw on the public purse.

1650

Don Drummond reported that half of all government spending is on public sector compensation. That's something like well over \$64 billion a year if we're looking at a budget—and again, this is a bit of a transparency issue. I think our budget is coming in at about \$130 billion this year. Those are dollars paid by people in the public sector, but by and large by people in the private sector. I think of private sector workers; many of them don't have pensions. They are footing the bill for public sector workers who do have pensions, who do have expense accounts. I know this is mentioned in the legislation. Bill 8 seems to ignore public sector expense accounts, other than PAs, cabinet ministers and MPPs.

I think the data is in. Again, if things were more transparent, we would know, but people who don't work in the public sector don't make nearly what people make on average in the public sector, the people they support in the public sector. I feel that people who are getting paid by taxpayers shouldn't be getting a better deal than the people who are essentially paying the freight themselves.

This Bill 8 proposed legislation in many ways doesn't have much in the way of teeth. I don't know how much of an impact it's going to have on that \$130-billion budget this year. It's a bit of tinkering around the edges. I would ask this government to give us some amendments, give us some legislation that would shine some sunshine so we can compare public sector and private sector. We need a bill that would help us to cut back on spending. I would favour cutting back on taxes. Obviously, everyone here talks about cutting back on the deficit, eventually cutting back on the debt, a debt that is projected to come in four years hence at something like—well, Don Drummond indicated \$411.4 billion. I ask people here: Consider your legacy. Consider where we're going to be even four years from now.

I'm in the baby boom crowd. I think our generation has had a good run. There has always been work if you wanted to do it. By and large, people were willing to work. We inherited a great system from the generation before us, something we think about during this time of remembrance. But I'm concerned. What are we handing to the generation following? Not only the economy but with respect to the fiscal accountability and transparency of this particular government. What kind of a debt are we handing down to those who are following us?

Bill 8: I consider it a start. Oversight, obviously, saves money. We can't bring in layer and layer of new staff and bureaucrats who do nothing but serve as overseers. Oversight is the job of management. We have management already. They're paid to do this job.

What really concerns me, though, is that it's so hard to get the figures, to open up the books just to determine how unfair the system is if you compare public sector and private sector. The public sector in Ontario, on average, is making something like 30% more than the private sector, if you include job security, vacations and various perks. If you look at a \$130-billion budget, that indicates that there's an inequitable allocation of something like \$19 billion a year over and above what public sector workers would normally be making at regular market rates. If we're going to talk about transparency, I feel we should be documenting and addressing some of this.

It raises the issue, going into the accountability side, of who is minding the store? Who's responsible? Who do we hold accountable for some of these inequities? Just how rigorous is the oversight of the public payroll? There is the perception that public sector workers work shorter hours. There's the perception that they have a myriad of other top-ups and perks. This has to be documented, and that can be done through a more transparent system.

There's a bit of research, Speaker. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has done some work on this. It's frustrating for them to try and pull the data. They have come up with a figure, and I quote: "... benefits and shorter work weeks, the public sector total compensation advantage balloons past 30%."

The Fraser Institute has done research on this and pulled together some data. But again, expert think tanks and groups have the wherewithal to pull this out. I think a



lot of this stuff could be made much more public than it is.

We know that salaries over 100 grand are published in the media. I have seen the direction really going the wrong way over the years. I was in a job a number of years ago—I taught high school. Every year, my salary would be published in the local daily paper. When I first started teaching high school, I recall, because I remember reading it in the paper, I was making \$6,800 a year. Every teacher in the province of Ontario had their salary published in the paper. We're debating transparency here. We don't publish the salaries under \$100,000.

We've been hearing this afternoon, and certainly in question period this morning, discussions about Ornge. I think that anybody taking a program in management or business in the future would probably have a professor who would use the Ornge air ambulance debacle as a bit of a case study. I spent two years on that committee. Frank Klees raised so many questions, meeting after meeting during the deliberations, and there's a wealth of information there. The OPP have been working on this stuff, I guess, for close to two years now. There's still no report back from the OPP—criminal charges—so stay tuned for that one.

We know that Bill 8 addresses the Ornge scandal. I'll quote part of the legislation: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint one or more provincial representatives to ... the board of directors of a designated air ambulance service," in other words, Ornge—appoint special investigators and appoint supervisors. My concern, and I know we called for much of this during committee deliberations—more investigators, more supervisors—can we afford this? Can we afford the expense? It's not only Ornge, but other agencies, ministry by ministry, other sectors that we should be overseeing. Can we afford to hire all these people? Isn't oversight, isn't transparency and accountability a function of management? We have managers within the public service. Do we necessarily need to hire so many other people to supervise and oversee what's going on? I'm very concerned about the potential for more bureaucracy, and by extension more expense for the taxpayer.

We also know that the bill will provide whistle-blower protection for people who disclose information "to an inspector ... special investigator" or the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Ornge has been in the coffee shops and in the headlines for several years now. I've had a chance to look at it up close. We all started with that report from Auditor General Jim McCarter and day after day of testimony before the committee. It has painted a picture that's about as hard to understand now as it was two years ago of a complex, convoluted network known as Ornge, and it includes a list. Much of this really hasn't been published yet. I don't think much of this is in the report. There's a list of spin-off private sector companies as long as your arm.

The Auditor General can't look at these companies. They're kind of like Tarion. The AG cannot look at these

organizations and private sector companies. Were they spun off using public sector money? Should we have the power to take a look at that? Should we have the power to take a look at Tarion, for that matter?

#### 1700

Take a look at that report. I've had it on my desk, I guess, since four days before the election—a number of days before the election. It's really unfortunate that it wasn't released after we published it, but that was politics. Again, it's a read—a lack of oversight, a lack of control, going back to the inception of Ornge. It didn't seem like anybody was being held to account, certainly not the Minister of Health.

The Auditor General's report identified something like \$700 million in government funding going out the door, with no follow-up. There was no oversight from the get-go. It's an organization that was set up a number of years ago to ensure the safety and the timely transport of patients needing air ambulance services. They had agreements with the ministry.

In 2006, they were to set and to monitor standards: The "end result will be improved care, improved access to service, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of service, and the assurance of greater fiscal and medical accountability." But the report really does paint a different picture. For example, we discovered that while funding to Ornge had increased something like 20% in 2006-07, the number of patients had actually decreased by 6%.

Land ambulance: Ornge received \$65 million to perform what are called inter-facility land ambulance transfers, projected to number 20,000 annually. However, Ornge was only providing 15% of that number of projected transfers. We saw the ministry continue to dole out the cash, really oblivious to where the money was going, and we saw the board.

This legislation does put a bit more control over the board, and I think that's a good idea. The board, the management at the time, created that network of for-profit and not-for-profit subsidiaries, other companies and all kinds of financial, convoluted arrangements. It was very difficult to figure out what was going on out there.

The corporate head office: Here's a good example of a convoluted arrangement. As the auditor pointed out, Ornge used \$15 million, borrowed through a bond issue, to purchase the building that presently houses the corporate head office. Then they entered into a complex arrangement with other entities. They sold the building and then leased it back to themselves. That didn't go over very well, in the auditor's view. He calculated: "Over the first five years of the 25-year lease, this amounts to Ornge paying \$2 million more" than it should pay—again, a lack of oversight.

They borrowed \$300 million to finance, amongst other things, 12 new helicopters, 10 new airplanes and 11 used helicopters—twice as many helicopters as they could use. Again, where does the responsibility lie? Where is the accountability? We heard this again and again over the

last several years. It lies with the Minister of Health, who didn't resign over any of this.

When we talked about Ornge—and I'll spell Ornge: it's O-R-N-G-E. The A is missing. In our view, that A stands for accountability. Accountability was missing. To spend two years on this committee, you had to come up with something to keep going.

Something else that came up—and maybe I'll just fast-forward quickly. We know that the OPP investigation is outstanding. Those of us on that committee have become a little cynical. I've become cynical about politicians and about bureaucrats when we see that government control and accountability and oversight were absent—not only on the money, but with respect to the health and safety of the patients—so many red flags that add up to a tremendous list of mismanagement, really.

Again, it all lies with management, in my view. Evaluation, control, oversight and accountability are all functions of management. If management isn't doing the job, I feel someone should be found who does the job.

But I question—and perhaps I could question, our own Ornge report: Do we necessarily need to hire layer after layer of people to oversee management? Let's let management do their job.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I listened intently to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I think there may be some room for us to work together on a couple of issues, and I'm a little surprised, but maybe I'm just hearing what I want to hear, which actually sometimes does happen.

He did mention that public employees in the broader public sector make too much money. This is really surprising to me because if he looks at the research and the evidence and how this government has accelerated the privatization agenda—and that's what it is. It's happening in almost every ministry. I know this because I'm the critic for the Treasury Board, so my job is to follow the money. When you follow the money, you see very, very clearly that public services are being contracted out at very poor value to the people of this province. It's happening in IT, on road maintenance. There's even talk now of privatizing jails because that's working so well for the United States, don't you agree?

So when the member from Haldimand–Norfolk says that the red flag has been raised on these layers of bureaucrats who are from the private sector who are being paid twice as much—two to three times as much as in-house management is—in fact, in some instances, it's just beyond—it's like a Monty Python skit. There are private sector managers who are dictating to people who actually know how to do the work, and they're getting paid twice as much. I mean, only in Ontario, apparently.

Perhaps there's some common ground. Perhaps the Progressive Conservatives who really started the privatization agenda way back in the 1990s—maybe the light has gone on and perhaps we can fight the waste and scandal with the privatization agenda in this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's my pleasure to respond to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I want to say that I am proud to represent his son. When he comes to Ottawa South next time, I'll show him where Grasshopper Hill is.

I was encouraged by his comments. It was a bit of a start, this bill. I am disappointed that he's become cynical. I don't know how that could happen. But I do want to talk about salary disclosure because he did raise salary disclosure and maybe reducing the amount that we set as a bar to disclose. If you take a look at salary disclosure, sometimes there are unintended consequences when you do things. What salary disclosure became for the broader public service, the MUSH sector, was actually a pay scale, a grade that people would check and, I would argue, had a serious impact on those salaries. That's why we need to have some restrictions around executive compensation. I know of a lot of examples where people just went there and looked and boards of directors made decisions based on that as something like a salary grid.

I also want to talk about salary disclosure because I want to talk about another bill about accountability brought forth in the 39th Parliament by the member from Nepean–Carleton with the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook that was called the Truth in Government Act. Now the Truth in Government Act had a lot of pieces like we have in this piece of legislation—not as broad, but a good piece of work that talked about members' expenses. It used the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act—it used the schedule in there to say that this is who it applies to. So it applies to everybody in that schedule except for section (j). What is section (j)? The Legislative Assembly—so truth in government does not apply here. The one thing I learned from that is, be careful what you name your bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

1710

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's a pleasure to provide a couple of minutes of comments on the wonderful speech by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I want to join my colleagues in wishing him a happy birthday. The one thing that I have learned about the member is that Toby Barrett, the member for Haldimand–Folk, when he says something, is a man of his word. You know what? When he tells you something, he really means it.

When I look at this bill and this government's words on accountability and transparency—I've done this a couple of times since we've come back; I've quoted from the throne speech. The throne speech says, "Your government knows that trust is hard-earned, but easily lost."

Earlier today, we were speaking about Bill 10, and I think we were pretty clear. I think both opposition parties were pretty clear—maybe for different reasons, but we wanted the bill to go for hearings. Again, just a few moments ago, as House leader of the official opposition,



I get the time allocation motion from this government on Bill 10.

So, again with this bill, Bill 8, they're going to time-allocate it. They are not going to have hearings like we want. They are not going to want to get this bill right, just like they didn't want to get Bill 10 right when day after day after day we asked for a very reasonable request: that we get out of this place and actually go and see Ontarians and listen to them. That's what we're saying about Bill 8. That's what we're saying about Bill 10. But yet over and over again, this government says one thing and it does something else. For them to table a motion like this a couple of hours after we have debate on a bill—you should be ashamed of yourselves.

The Premier gets really worked up when we talk about the rural-urban divide. She gets really offended. But you know what? Her actions and her government's actions on these bills keep that discussion alive. I really feel the government needs to smarten up, start travelling around the province and get out of the bubble that is this building.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's once again an honour to be able to stand up in this House and talk about Bill 8 and follow the member from Haldimand-Norfolk. I did listen intently to his remarks, and he really researched and he brought up a lot of good subjects.

But I'd like to focus on something the member from Ottawa South said, along with something the member from Leeds-Grenville said. The member from Ottawa South said something about becoming cynical in this House. The member from Leeds-Grenville talked about the rural and urban divide.

I'll give you an example of why I have become cynical sometimes in this House. That government cancelled our train service to northeastern Ontario. They cancelled the Northlander. At that point, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines said, "But we will replace it with an enhanced bus service," because when they cancelled the train, people with disabilities and seniors had no way to get to medical appointments—nothing.

You know what happened with that promise, Speaker? Nothing. That's what happened, until a couple of extremely brave, extremely dedicated residents in my riding—Brad Bondar, who has now since passed, and Lisa Dawn Buck—took this government to the Human Rights Commission. In a settlement with those two individuals, five wheelchair-accessible buses were put, or are now being put, on the road.

Now, that is why people in northern Ontario, people in rural Ontario, get cynical when we see omnibus bills with "amending various acts" on the bottom like that, when we—not me, as an MPP, but disabled people—have to take your government to the Human Rights Commission to get basic services in this province. That makes us cynical.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The member from Kitchener-Waterloo made mention of the NDP and the opposition working together, and gave a few examples. I will mention, on that, the public accounts committee. I mentioned Frank Klees. Certainly France and Jagmeet did a tremendous amount of work, as did all members of the committee on all sides. I know on the government side, membership changed a bit over the time that we were holding our deliberations.

Before that public accounts committee took on Ornge, there was a working together—the NDP and the PCs—both before and after, a call and a demonstration of bipartisanship. Both PC and NDP members called on the government to appoint an all-party select committee, again, to investigate Ornge, to try to help restore confidence in that very, very important service and to recommend structural changes, changes required in tandem with primary oversight.

The member for Ottawa South made mention that—I guess repeated what I said: Bill 8 is a start; there's a lot more—in fact, in many ways this bill could be a much larger bill.

Just to refer to the member for Leeds-Grenville talking about trust: Again, when a Minister of Health is on duty and this lack of oversight occurs, it is incumbent on that minister to step down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** As always, it's such an honor—one has to say it when one stands in this House—to represent the incredible people of Parkdale-High Park and, in fact, de facto, all those in Ontario as the opposition. It's incumbent, I think sometimes, upon the opposition to say that there is a role for opposition in this government. The role of opposition is to be critical of the government and critical of their bills, because sometimes when we listen to folk on the government side, it seems as if they don't understand that.

I want to take you way, way back. I heard the member from Haldimand-Norfolk talk about being a baby boomer. I am a proud baby boomer, too. Some of the baby boomers in this place will remember, during the Cuban missile crisis—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Oh.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Yes, that's way back.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** It was 1962.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Exactly.

When I was a very, very young child in elementary school, seeing a cartoon called Duck and Cover—do you remember that? I remember the cartoon. I remember it was hilarious. Basically, they showed it in our schools as the response—and I was at Jesse Ketchum Public School, so I was right on Bay Street, I was right in the epicentre of Toronto. If you were going to drop a nuclear bomb on Toronto, you would drop it on my public school. There's no question about it.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Exactly.

The duck-and-cover response of the government of the day to the educational system, to our classes—I remember seeing the cartoon. We did drills, Mr. Speaker, where we crouched down and hid under our desks. That was the government of the day's response to a possible nuclear attack on my school in downtown Toronto.

When I was looking at this bill, Bill 8, with its title, the accountability and transparency act, I couldn't help but think it should be retitled the duck-and-cover bill, because it will have about as much effect on transparency and accountability in government in the province of Ontario as the process of hiding under your desk would have had in keeping us safe during a nuclear attack in the Cuban missile crisis.

Let us speak more, because it was a pretty funny cartoon. Truly, if you want to see government in action, go back, look at it and think of it.

What are some of the problems? The incredibly eloquent member from Windsor—Tecumseh, who did his research and spoke about the constituent he spoke to when he knocked on the door, reminded me of a constituent I spoke to when I knocked on the door during the last election. She was a single parent. She was on social assistance, looking after two children, for a variety of reasons unimportant to the story. She explained to me that she couldn't afford to go to work. I mean, that in itself is a lesson for all of us, but particularly for this government. She couldn't afford to go to work. She actually kept more of her money and could keep her children better if she was on social assistance than if she worked on minimum wage. There's something wrong with that economy, I'll tell you. She really wanted to work and was making every effort to try to get programs so that she could earn more than minimum wage if she did go back.

1720

This is the woman who raised the issue to me—the only time it happened, actually, interestingly, in my riding—about the gas plant expenses, and how many billions this government has spent over the last 11 years, wasted on various enterprises. Lest we forget: eHealth, Ornge, the gas plants. Billions. For the single mother who used a food bank at the end of the month because her cheque didn't reach that far, that seemed to her to be such an immense amount of money that she couldn't even envision how much it was. But she felt that somebody should be held accountable for that. Truly, Mr. Speaker, who can blame her—that somebody should be accountable?

To go even further back, before eHealth, Ornge or the gas plants: When I was first elected here, back in 2006, I remember the days when we had a surplus in this government. The government of the day ended with a surplus. It was about a \$35-million surplus. It seems like utopia now, when you look at the deficit, but \$35 million was the surplus back then.

I remember that the minister of the day—now the member for Eglinton—Lawrence; it cost him his cabinet seat—spent that \$35 million very, very quickly, without a lot of oversight or transparency or accountability. I really don't think it was all his doing. A million dollars to a cricket club: Does anybody remember that? There are a couple of members here who were around that long ago. They gave \$1 million to a cricket club that didn't even ask for it. This is hilarious, actually. It's as funny as the duck-and-cover cartoon. Some \$1 million to a cricket club, among the rest of that money we could go into.

That was my first introduction to how this government operates—\$35 million. It was called Colle-gate, after the poor member, who has paid the price ever since. He was kind of sent to the corner by the government and has never been allowed to come back into the party and serve in cabinet again because of that. That was the first. So it actually has always been the métier of this government to operate that way, ever since day one, even when they had a surplus, even before the huge numbers that we got used to with the other scandals.

The eloquent member from Kitchener—Waterloo went through the bill itself and talked about why it isn't what it says it is—accountable or transparent—and why this government isn't what it says it is—accountable and transparent.

The patient ombudsman: the classic case here. It's interesting to hear Liberal members get up and read petitions from their communities in support of the patient ombudsman. I think, "These poor folk; were they to know what a real Ombudsman looks like versus the patient ombudsman in this bill." What's the difference? We've often used, in this House, the example of the fox looking after the henhouse. This isn't really the fox looking after the henhouse. This is: The fox hires another fox who's a friend of his to look after the henhouse. That's this patient ombudsman.

How can anybody be impartial, Mr. Speaker—which is the very bottom line for an ombudsman—at arm's length from the government and impartial? One of the things we ask ombudsmen to do all the time is to criticize the government. That's one of their jobs, right? How can this patient ombudsman be critical of the cabinet who hires him or her, number one, and can fire him or her at any time? How safe is that person in being critical of this government and the way it operates its health care system? How can that be? Anybody can see that that's impossible.

How can this ombudsman be impartial—able to be fired by the government at any time because there's no set term, and has no oversight of Ornge? You heard many members speaking about it this afternoon—one of the greatest scandals of this government's tenure here. This ombudsman can't look into Ornge—okay; can't look into private clinics. We heard today, in question period, about the 44 clinics who have completely dropped the ball in terms of patient safety. By the way, there's nothing new about this either. My uncle actually came here—well, actually, he came here when he was ailing but his niece



came here after his demise because he died of C. difficile. Does anybody here remember C. difficile in the hospitals and how difficult it was—again, accountability and transparency—to find the statistics on C. diff in our hospitals and our health care system? How difficult it was because we are the only province in Canada—let me repeat that: the only province in Canada—that does not have real ombudsman oversight over its hospital and health care system?

This patient ombudsman will not be that person. If you're listening and you're watching and you're signing those petitions, know this: This patient ombudsman will not be that person. Here's a scenario; it's probably not an unusual one: You have a loved one, a relative in a hospital or a health care centre, that relative dies and you have questions about their care. You want to investigate whether they got the care they deserved or not. You can't do it with this patient ombudsman. You can't do it, unless the patient has, before their untimely death, let's say, actually put you as the executor, given you the legal responsibility to look into their affairs; you can't investigate. It has to be the patient that does the investigating. What kind of structure is that? The patient who is ill or possibly dead has to do the investigating of their own care? Again, as you heard outlined, this ombudsman can't look at private clinics, can't look at retirement homes—again, a problem.

You heard again about the children and youth advocate. By the way, the children and youth advocate says it does not go far enough. It does not give him the powers he needs to look into children's aid and what they're doing. We've long called for that, of course, oversight over them. He can't compel evidence, can't look into mental health or the justice system. Again, not that long ago, I remember a group of parents coming to Queen's Park and holding a press conference, called Tragically NOHIP. Anybody remember that? It was a great slogan. Why? Because their children who suffered from mental health issues, many of them serious ones, many of them suicidal, could not find care in the province of Ontario. They had to mortgage their homes, had to dig into their savings to send them out of province to find care. Tragically NOHIP—I remember that group very well. Again, it's within the memory of someone who has served here eight years—not transparent, not accountable and not ever addressed.

The Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions: I think it was 23 recommendations, of which only three have been put into place. Again, transparency and accountability are not there either, not for those children.

What else? We heard about the executive so-called cap. To go back to my friend from Etobicoke Centre—congratulations on his election—who tried to argue that there is a cap in this legislation, there is no cap in this legislation. There is the promise to look at a cap in this legislation. My friends around the chamber, legislation is not a campaign promise. It shouldn't be. It shouldn't be yet another promise to look into something. The legislation is supposed to be the promise enacted. That's the

point of policy. That's the difference between actual policy and campaign promises. But what we see here about caps for compensation for those in the public sector is yet again another promise to look into it, not a hard cap, not any of that. You don't need a piece of policy, you don't need a bill to say you're going to look into what the cap should be. You just do it. You look into what the cap should be, and then you write the policy. That's not transparent or accountable either.

That would leave my single parent trying to raise two children on social assistance with some very big questions because she would say—she's not a lawyer and she's not a legislator—"I read this and there's no cap in here. What is the cap?" she would say. "Where is the cap?" I would have to say, "Well, we called for \$418,000, twice the Premier's salary, but unfortunately this legislation does not deliver on that."

1730

We heard again today in question period, not that long ago, about consultants hired, really with the ostensible duty to privatize our electrical system—at least part of it, so they say—but we don't know who they are, and we asked, and we don't know how much they make. That's not accountable; that's not transparent.

That was asked today in question period. As you heard, the member from Leeds—Grenville got up and just said, "Five minutes ago, I was given this piece of paper by the House leader saying they're going to invoke closure." They're going to stop debate and stop hearings on the Child Care Modernization Act. I can tell you that there are folk in my riding who would very much like to come to those hearings. I hope they get a chance, and I suspect they won't, because again, they're shutting down debate on an important bill that came out of children's deaths and an absolutely scathing report from the real Ombudsman on child care in this province—absolutely scathing. Read that report. If you read nothing else this year, read that report. That's about our children. Children's deaths led to that report that led, presumably, to this piece of legislation. This piece of legislation ain't going to save any children. I can tell you that right now: It won't save any children.

So we still have the same problem, yet we can't talk about it because the debate has been shut down. That's not transparent and that's not accountable. That's not what a government that wants to be transparent or accountable does.

You heard another member talking about MaRS. Again, we're not talking about the ex-Premier, who will not be named—Dalton McGuinty—we're talking about the current Premier, Kathleen Wynne. We're talking about her. This is under her watch. This is under this government's, this administrator's and this administration's watch. It's still not accountable and not transparent.

So we heard about MaRS, and we heard that wonderful quote—oh, it's a doozy; it's fabulous; I mean, come on, it's quotable—from the member from Trinity-Spadina, who said, "We believe in transparency and accountability—at the right time." That's not accountable

and that's not anywhere close to transparent, but that is actually how they think.

He was just being honest, and I applaud him for that; I applaud him for his honesty. He will very quickly learn the political game of not saying quite what you think—because he said what he thought and he said what they all think. That's exactly what they think and that's what this bill shows.

Really, this bill, if it's not the duck-and-cover bill, it should be the transparency and accountability at the right time bill, because that's what it's really about. That's what this policy shows—and the right time, by the way, is never now, because if it was now, then, as you've heard other members say, we would have Mr. Faist and Ms. Miller coming to the committee and telling us why, with military-grade software, they wiped the computers clean—presumably, we don't know—in the Premier's office, not the last Premier, who will not be named—Dalton McGuinty—but the current Premier, the current administration, this government.

I just have a couple of minutes left and so much more to say. Oh, by the way, hats off to David Lepofsky and the act for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act Alliance, because they were forced to pay \$200—finally that was dropped after much screaming and yelling, and the Star got on their side—for FOI requests to find out why industries are not accessible yet to those with disabilities—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Sorry, the Speaker is not acknowledging you, member from Etobicoke—

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I rise on a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I heard you say you're rising on a point of order. I recognize you on a point of order, the member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Standing order 23(i) prohibits a member from imputing false or unwavering motives to another member. The member for Parkdale–High Park indicated that I had suggested in my remarks that this bill imposes caps on executive compensation. I did not suggest that. What I did indicate was that the bill provides the government with the ability to impose those caps.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I don't find that there's a valid point of order, and I return to the member for Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What the member didn't hear me say was that the government already has that ability. They don't have to pass a bill for that ability. That's what I said. They don't have to write into policy the ability to investigate caps on public service sector salaries. They don't have to. This is a bill; it's called policy. That is something government already has the power to do. That's what I said.

Anyway, to go back to those with disabilities who are looking for transparency and accountability as to what's happening with that act that's supposed to be put into place by 2025, they were denied, and they are still denied. They have still not received their freedom of information

act request as to which organizations and businesses have complied with that act and which plan to do so. That's not accountable, and that's not transparent either.

Anyway, I have very few seconds left, but I just want to send a shout-out to the wonderful woman whose door I knocked on, who's trying to raise two children on social assistance, who would love to know where the money went and wonders why the money, in part, hasn't gone to help her raise her two children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Speaking after the honourable member opposite is a little bit like dancing after Baryshnikov. That having been said, I'm always entranced with what she has to say. She says it so well and has raised a number of very significant points. I think on that score, we're one in terms of looking at some potential challenges to this bill.

That having been said, the government isn't out to boil the ocean here. We're out to make some pragmatic and important changes to the way this place does business—everything from recording expenses to the broader public sector to enhanced accountability in the municipal sector and the university sector; also the enhanced and very practical expression of accountability with respect to the patient advocate and concerns around children and youth.

I would note, in passing, that the current Ombudsman, who I think is doing a pretty good job most days, was effusive in his praise of this legislation when we first introduced it. We, of course, as a government, worked closely with the Ombudsman to ensure that he was in sync with our thinking and, to a very large extent, that was the case. We're trying to move forward on a number of fronts. We're doing it in a very pragmatic way. Could we do more? Perhaps, but this is a good start. It gets us on the right track, and that's why we introduced the legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to commend the member from Parkdale–High Park on her remarks. I remember Duck and Cover. I'd forgotten about it until she started speaking about it.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Well, you have a patent on it.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I do go back that far. I do remember that. I'm kind of dating myself by admitting that. I notice a number of members over there don't even know what we're speaking about when we mention that.

There are a lot of areas to cover, but as I was thinking about the title of this and thinking about accountability and transparency, I was thinking about the Green Energy Act and the lack of accountability in rural Ontario, especially in my area of the province and the riding next door to me and a number of others where they imposed wind turbines against the wishes of the people. That's not transparent. It's indicative again today, with the admission by our House leader that they're going to have time allocation—that's certainly no way to operate if you really want to make this Legislature work. It's going to



be a long three and a half years. If the government's going to continue to have these time allocation motions and trying to railroad and ramrod these things through, we're going to do our bit, with the third party and ourselves, to bring up good points like the member from Parkdale-High Park did today, along with many of our members from all three parties.

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Anyway, we need to get this bill to committee and we need to try and get some improvements to it. It affects over 16 different acts. I don't think it's going to be the transparency that the government is trying to hold it out to be. As our members and the different members have said as we went on this afternoon, I think integrity is the way you do things. Why do we have to have acts of the Legislature to impose integrity and accountability? I thought that was something that most people in this province were raised with. If you're a member in here and you're a member of the executive council, you should know about integrity and you should know about accountability. If you had any decency, you'd resign when you don't.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you to the member from Parkdale-High Park for allowing us to take that trip down memory lane this afternoon. I too recall the duck-and-cover drills because I grew up on our military bases. We were always told that we'd be one of the first targets.

I really want to thank the member for bringing to our attention—I hope the government was listening—the story about a constituent of hers who's living on social assistance trying to raise two children, not having enough money for food or to keep her children warm because of the money wasted on the Liberal scandals. It's a million here, a million there, a billion here, a billion there. The money is wasted. It could have been spent on the needy, the really vulnerable in our province, and it wasn't.

We talk about accountability. Again, the member spoke about the need for the justice committee. What a good name, “justice committee,” because the lady that she spoke about with the two kids that are hungry and cold wants justice. They want justice. They want to know why they didn't get the money and the money was wasted on the scandals. They want answers. We want answers. The people of Ontario want answers from the final two witnesses to go before the justice committee. Like I say, we can talk about three and a half or four more years, but what about one more day? One more day of questions, one more day of testimony under oath—what's the problem? That would show the people of Ontario that there's meat to the bone. There are people there that say, “Yes, okay, accountability and transparency.” Finally, they're going to put us on the table. Finally, we'll get some of that, and we don't have it so far.

What you see is what you get, folks. There are no caps in the bill. The member finally mentioned it. There is nothing in this bill about caps. Thank you to the member for Parkdale-High Park for dragging that out of him.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** One last question and comment?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's my pleasure to respond to the member from Parkdale-High Park. As always, she was very creative and expressed herself exceptionally well. It is hard to follow her. There was definitely an animal theme to it: ducks and foxes. I don't want to say that there was anything fishy about her remarks, but I will try to respond just for the halibut.

I do disagree with her on the patient ombudsman. I see some of the things that she's saying. I just want to go back to what I believe is important in terms of people's individual needs. As members, we respond to those, and I think having a patient ombudsman will address that need.

If you look at the larger challenges around our health care system, we have a number of colleges. We have public health authorities that are separate from us. I think we have to give them an opportunity to do their job as well, too. But I take her comments to heart and I appreciate them very much.

I do want to add about the salary cap: We do have one in place for hospital executive compensation. I understand that there's still a lot more work to do. We're serious about doing that, and I want to let the member know that as well.

I want to thank the member from Windsor-Essex for his kind remarks on our expectant grandchildren in the new year. I am very excited about it. And I want to congratulate him on his earlier passion on another issue. He rivalled the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane for his passion. I want to let the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane know that I wasn't being glib about cynicism. I really do believe there's a difference between criticism and cynicism. I firmly believe—although you may not feel that way about us on this side of the House—that there is always hope. I always feel there's hope over there. I appreciate your comments very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Parkdale-High Park has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I have to say that, as a New Democrat, of course we live in hope over here. That's all we have, some days.

I want to thank the former Minister of Community and Social Services—a friend and, by the way, the other United Church minister in here; not everybody knows that we're the only two clergy in the House—and the members from Sarnia-Lambton, Ottawa South and, of course, Windsor-Tecumseh as well.

We were talking, of course, about the accountability and transparency act, which I dubbed the duck-and-cover act. I hadn't actually thought about “duck” as an animal. It was more “duck under.” But anyway, it doesn't matter.

Here's the thing: It will be truly rich indeed—and, mark my words; this is in Hansard—if this government invokes closure on the accountability and transparency act, because—come on. You have got to laugh at that. You have got to laugh at shutting down debate on an accountability and transparency act and limiting the number of hearings about it too. Please, friends across the

aisle: Come on. This is rich irony indeed. As we suspect, that is what they're going to do.

For those of you watching, for those of you listening, for those of you who will be reading the Hansard: Just mark this. This government may very well invoke closure, shut down debate, stop debate on a transparency and accountability bill. Got to love it.

Anyway, to the legitimate question about the patient ombudsman: The good news is, the real Ombudsman is going to be following the patient ombudsman and making sure they do their job.

With that, we look forward to the closure motion on the accountability and transparency act and have to laugh.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I referred to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh as the member from Windsor–Essex. I guess we're even now, because I'm reciprocating for what happened the previous week. I apologize.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Apology accepted, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That doesn't always happen around here. Thank you.

Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to have the opportunity in the last few minutes this afternoon to add some comments to Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts.

Mr. Speaker, this bill—schedule 2 deals with amendments to the Ambulance Act. I had the pleasure, for the last two years, of being quite involved with the Ornge air ambulance report, chairing the public accounts committee for the past two years. I was really pleased to see that the report was just tabled recently in the Legislature. It's a substantial report. I'm hoping that the government learns and uses that report. There was a lot of work put into it over two years by members of all parties, and I certainly want to thank some of the members who spent an awful lot of time working on it, in particular Frank Klees, who was the member from Newmarket–Aurora; France Gélinas, the member from Nickel Belt; Helena Jaczek, who's now a minister, of course, the member for Oak Ridges; Jagmeet Singh; and education minister Liz Sandals, who I think was there before Helena Jaczek. Those members in particular spent an awful lot of time on the report.

The reason I'm happy to see it, besides all the work, and I think there are a lot of good recommendations that come out of the report—it was actually the Wednesday before the election was called on the Friday that the committee, at its regular meeting, signed off on it. It was going to the printer to be printed. It was going to be tabled in this Legislature on the Monday following that. We were in the midst of a provincial election at that stage, so I was quite concerned that it may never see the light of day, so I'm pleased that it has actually been tabled in the Legislature. This bill, Bill 8, in a small part

addresses some things that come out of the report, but there's still far more that can be done.

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On the topic of ambulances, I do want to raise an issue that's directly connected with ambulances in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, and that is the situation that's occurring in the northern part of the riding, in Port Loring–Argyle. Mr. Speaker, you may be familiar with that area, as I know you do spend some time in the summer at your family's cottage up there, enjoying beautiful Parry Sound–Muskoka.

It's an issue of real concern to me right now. Essentially, at this present moment, if you were in Port Loring, Mr. Speaker, at your family's cottage, and you had some serious medical emergency, you might wait two hours for an ambulance, because there is not an ambulance station there anymore. There was until this summer, but it was a unique area in that it was the only area in the whole province that had volunteer paramedics. They had two volunteer paramedics who did a great job. That was getting hard to sustain because of all the training and qualifications required. Unfortunately, one of the paramedics passed away this summer, so that ended. Now we have a situation where there isn't an ambulance station there.

It's actually administered by the town of Parry Sound, which makes the final decisions on the whole district of Parry Sound's ambulance services. They have an emergency services advisory committee. I attended a public meeting—I think it was in late August, early September—up in Port Loring, which was at the Legion hall. The building was full of people and they were very passionate about the fact that they don't have proper coverage right now. One of their complaints was that the advisory committee that advises the town of Parry Sound doesn't have any representation from the unorganized territories. I have since learned that to get representation, they need to apply to the town of Parry Sound to try to get representation.

The town of Parry Sound in the summertime—I believe it was in July—made the decision to try to provide coverage, and they were going to take a 12-hour shift from the village of South River, the night shift, and move it to Port Loring, move an ambulance and crew there for a 12-hour shift, and then it would be on call for the other 12 hours.

Unfortunately, there was a lot of pushback from all east Parry Sound, all the municipalities that didn't want to lose existing ambulance service that they already have, and I could see their point of view as well. Then the committee again met in August and they came up with what is the situation currently, and that is that there's basically an SUV station in the Port Loring–Argyle area and there is a fully qualified paramedic who is there for a 12-hour shift and on call for another 12-hour shift. The problem is that there's no actual ambulance.

You, of course, Mr. Speaker, are very familiar with the area, so you know it's not close to any hospital. It's probably at least an hour drive, one way, for an ambu-



lance to get to the area and then another hour back, so you're probably two hours to get to a hospital. And it's huge, so that could go up by a significant amount as well. I think it's a real concern that there's not actually an ambulance station there. It's something that I would like to see changed.

They are consulting right now. The town of Parry Sound and the advisory committee have hired a consultant to look at coverage for the entire Parry Sound district, I assume, to see if they can maybe shuffle things around a bit. The only problem with that is that other areas of this district, if they feel they're losing services, are not going to be happy about it.

I think we need to look at possible solutions. Certainly dollars and cents are a consideration. I think the number I heard was \$1.2 million if you want to station an ambulance there full time with paramedics etc. Perhaps creative solutions—they've had volunteer paramedics in the past. What about volunteer drivers? They've already got a vehicle there. Station an ambulance there, and perhaps have volunteer drivers; maybe you could use volunteer firefighters and train them to be the drivers for an ambulance that was stationed there. Use the paramedic who is already assigned, and then you would at least have transportation. I think that's one possibility at least, and I certainly will look forward to seeing what comes out of the report.

I absolutely feel that the distance and location of Port Loring-Argyle is such that there absolutely needs to be an ambulance station there. Currently, at this time, the area is not being properly served and is at risk. Seeing as we were talking about ambulances today, and there's a whole section in Bill 8 to do with ambulances, I wanted to get that on the record.

I'll now go on to speak about other sections of the bill. I see that Schedule 1 deals with the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act. Today in question period, the member from Dufferin-Caledon asked a question specifically about community care access centres. I don't know the name of their particular CCAC, but she pointed out that their executive director is making some \$260,000 and just received some sort of \$24,000 bonus or increase.

I have problems with that. I have problems with that because as MPPs, we've all, on a daily basis, had people coming to our office who are trying to get coverage for someone. The hours that are meted out for home care or personal support workers—I think it's 12 hours maximum per week. The government's intended aging-at-home policy is to keep people in their homes, but then they don't provide enough home care to actually keep people in their homes.

I know I met with a son in the last month or so; his two parents are aging, and they have various complications, and it was exactly about that issue. I have a problem that the personal support workers don't make a lot of money, and there seems to be so much in the administration part of it, including the executive directors. I just simply feel that you could hire people for less money than that to do that job, and the savings should be passed on to provide more services for the front-line care.

I know that I recently had an inquiry in the Parry Sound area from a person who, just in the past year, had an accident and is now a paraplegic. They're trying to figure out how to cope, and they're being told by the CCAC, "Well, we can only provide this much care," and it's not enough. So when you see that scenario and then look at the huge salaries being paid out, I think there should be some controls.

I come back to Ornge. The trigger for the government finally digging deeper into Ornge air ambulance—really, one of the big red flags was Dr. Chris Mazza's pay. Only through a long, long time and the committee doing an awful lot of digging did it come out that he was making more than \$1 million a year yet wasn't showing up on the sunshine list. I think it's certainly an issue that needs to be dealt with.

We've heard from other members saying that this legislation doesn't really adequately deal with the issue, but I think, in principle, it is something that a government with limited dollars needs to look at.

I can see that it's almost time to stop talking. I'll talk a bit about one other section, and let me just see which section it is. It's the section to do with the Lobbyists Registration Act. I'm not sure which schedule that is—here it is; it's schedule 8. We have pretty weak lobbyist legislation in Ontario. It did come up in the Ornge air ambulance situation that somebody was lobbying, and they were found to be lobbying despite not being registered. Basically, there's nothing at this time that the lobbyist registrar, who is Ontario's Integrity Commissioner, can do about it. This legislation purports to strengthen that and give some enforcement powers to the Ontario Integrity Commissioner. I certainly think that needs to happen because right now, when they do find that someone is breaking the rules, really there's no penalty. So that is something that needs to be improved.

I see my time is out, so I will end my comments now.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

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Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon  
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas  
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim





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**Legislative Assembly  
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des débats  
(Hansard)****Tuesday 4 November 2014****Mardi 4 novembre 2014**Speaker  
Honourable Dave LevacPrésident  
L'honorable Dave LevacClerk  
Deborah DellerGreffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 November 2014

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 novembre 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION

### ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, November 17, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and Tuesday, November 18, 2014, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 10:

—notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire;

—witnesses are scheduled on a first-come first-served basis;

—each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members;

—the deadline for written submissions is 8:30 p.m. on the second day of public hearings;

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 p.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2014.

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 24, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., and Tuesday, November 25, 2014, from 4 p.m.

to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 12 midnight for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

On Monday, November 24, 2014, at 3 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, November 26, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Mr. Bradley moves notice of motion number 7. I recognize the deputy government House leader.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm very pleased to contribute to this important debate, and I look forward to hearing from my honourable colleagues across the aisle.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** But not the people of Ontario.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm even looking forward to hearing the candidates for the leadership of what they call the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario. I used to call it that, Mr. Speaker; now I call it the Conservative Party of Ontario. You'll hear from my—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Perhaps we'll have a chance for all of the people who are leadership candidates, except one who is not going to be able to be here but will



be here in spirit, that being, of course, the gentleman who ran for mayor of Toronto, who I understand if not the front runner is at least second in the race at this time. We would be delighted to see him in the race and contributing.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Now I want to get back to the motion, at the suggestion of the opposition House leader. By the way, I've had that job of opposition House leader, and I can predict the speech that you will be making on that occasion. In fact, he could probably simply go to Hansard and the speech would be ready for you.

Mr. Speaker, five months ago—yes, fully five months ago—the people of Ontario gave our government a strong mandate. They placed their faith in our government and our priorities. They were clear that they wanted their government to pass bills. They asked the members elected to get their acts together and work together for the interests of Ontarians. The people of Ontario expect their government to take action on (1) helping to strengthen our economy, (2) investing in modern infrastructure and (3) supporting our essential services. Our government appreciates that. That's why we are committed to making this Parliament functional.

This government is determined to deliver results for the people of Ontario, and a key part of the government's ambitious legislative agenda is Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I would like to thank the minister, Liz Sandals, for all of her hard work in bringing this bill forward and the widespread consultation that she has been engaged in previous to bringing it forward. I know that her office and the Ministry of Education have worked closely and held extensive consultation with all of its education partners, including child care providers and relevant stakeholders, to develop this proposed legislation.

Now, in general, I want to say at this point in my remarks that the concern I had with the previous situation, where the opposition had more seats than the government, was that very little legislation was moving through. Minority government does have an opportunity to work. The best experience I think I had with a true minority Parliament was from 1977 to 1981. There had already been a minority Parliament from 1975 to 1977, previous to my coming to this House by virtue of the support of the people of St. Catharines—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You didn't run in the 1975 election.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I did not.

On that occasion—what I wanted to describe to you is this: The 1975 to 1977 era was not all that productive. People weren't used to a minority Parliament, so it didn't work well. The government wasn't as responsive as it should have been, and the opposition wasn't as responsible as it should have been, so it was not functioning very well. Premier Davis called an election to get a majority, in fact, and fell short of that majority. There was a recognition that we had already had one minority Parliament; now we were going to have another one.

**0910**

I think the three parties determined that it was going to work. The government brought forward its legislation. The opposition debated it, but there was reasonableness on all sides. It worked very well for Premier Davis. In fact, as a result of that almost four years—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** In 1981.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:**—in 1981, March 19, 1981, the government was returned with a majority at that point in time.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I can recall for the member for Pembroke—sorry, for Barry's Bay—I can recall for him, and I will recall this for him, that when talking about how we're no longer in a minority Parliament, he used terminology which said, "Welcome to the realities of March 19." I'm not going to use that terminology today because I think that would be inappropriate; it would sound arrogant to say it.

I always look forward to the interventions of the opposition. It's never enough time for the opposition; I understand that. I spent more time in this Legislature on that side of the House than I have on this side of the House, so I fully understand where the Legislature comes from.

I also understand that while, yes, there may be those who would be speaking and manoeuvring only to delay things, there's also genuine concern amongst members of the Legislature. I would suggest that on all sides there are concerns about any bill and the ramifications of the bill. So I don't demean the role of the opposition. You have debated this extensively. The critic has asked some significant questions in the House, as he should, and has done so in an exemplary fashion, in my view. But we have to proceed with this legislation. We have to move this legislation forward. It's not as though it's something nobody knew about; it is something that we knew was coming forward.

I want to provide some context on how we got to this point in time. Bill 10 was originally introduced on December 3, 2013, almost a full year ago. It went through several hours of debate on second reading—not one or two hours, several hours of debate on second reading. The government endeavoured to pass this bill in the previous Parliament but had no luck because the opposition, it says here, needlessly tied up the business of the Legislature.

This bill has been debated in the Legislature eight different days since it was introduced last year, including six days within the past two weeks. So once again, there has been some extensive debate. I've followed it, if not right in the Legislature itself; I have followed it through both the electronic Hansard and the print Hansard, which I no longer have on my desk, but is available to members of the Legislature.

By stalling this bill, the opposition isn't just delaying urgent action for our children; they are blocking other important bills from moving forward at the same time. We need to move this bill forward.

If passed, Bill 10 will modernize our child care and early years system. The proposed bill will replace the outdated legislation that currently governs child care in Ontario, and I know that's something everybody will want to see happen. This legislation will make our system more responsive to the needs of parents and children. It will strengthen the oversight of the child care sector.

As I already mentioned, the ministry has undertaken extensive stakeholder engagement at every stage of its work on child care modernization. I think that's important to note. When you say you've had consultation, it doesn't mean you're going to agree and adopt everything everyone says. That was a valuable opportunity to be able to consult with people. That included engagement with private school operators, who are not currently licensed under the DNA, as well as numerous members of the licensed child care sector, including the Home Child Care Association of Ontario.

Speaker, permit me to provide some background on this type of motion we're debating this morning. As members may know, time allocation was codified in the standing orders in the early 1990s when the NDP was in power, and I well remember that. The NDP is both the mother and father of time allocation motions because very extensive amendments and changes to the orders of the day, the procedures of this Legislature, were made by the NDP. When they get up to speak about the fact that time allocation isn't an appropriate tool to be implementing—they are both the father and mother, they are the parents, of time allocation motions in this province, because they recognized at the time—they truly believed at the time—that, in fact, the opposition of the day was being obstructionist. It was difficult for them to move the legislation forward, so they decided to provide for this.

This will help speed up things since this change in standing orders allowed governments to put forward a debatable motion that would limit the length of debates on government bills and motions and help speed up passage of key legislation. Time allocation motions allow for committee time, where the real work happens. As always, the public will have an opportunity to participate through public hearings and written submissions.

I should say, at this point in time, I well recall when the official opposition was in power under Mr. Harris as the Premier that often there wasn't any committee time that took place. There was no allocation of time permitted there. So therefore, our government is permitting committee time, not rejecting committee time as the Conservatives did when they were in power. I know you weren't here, Mr. Speaker, at that time because you would have spoken in caucus vociferously against the fact that there would be no committee time included. Well, there is committee time in this particular case.

This motion allows for two days of public hearings that go into the evening—now that's something a little different; go right into the evening—so that all who have an interest in this important piece of legislation can appear before the committee. The opposition parties are welcome to put forward amendments to strengthen the

bill, if they believe it needs strengthening, during the clause-by-clause process.

Time allocation is one part of the legislative tool kit available and has been used by all three parties in the Ontario Legislature, some more frequently than others.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** As consecutively as this party?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** From 1999 to 2003—probably the member for Barry's Bay wanted to know this fact: From 1999 to 2003, the last Conservative government time-allocated 60% of its bills.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** You're at 100%.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Something else to consider: The PC Party supported time allocation as recently as the last minority government, and I was pleased to see that.

Although it is our government's preference to allow bills to progress through the normal course, these types of motions are from time to time necessary. Our government has an ambitious legislative agenda, because that is what we believe the people of Ontario deserve. I urge all members of this House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves having had some extensive debate, having consultations taking place by the Minister of Education and by members of the House who have received written representations or perhaps have had meetings with people with a specific interest in this bill. There has been a lot of debate, a lot of discussion. Those who are directly impacted have had a great knowledge of the intricacies of this bill and have made known their comments so that when the bill was being formed, there were changes that took place that reflected some of the consultations that the Minister of Education had at that time.

I know members of the opposition are eager to speak to this piece of legislation. I want to give them that opportunity. My anticipation is that the House leader of the official opposition will be speaking in favour and voting in favour of the legislation, though I may be incorrect in that. The NDP, who are the parents of time allocation motions, of course, will be supporting this with a good deal of enthusiasm.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I say, you're doing a wonderful job in the chair.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would like to thank the member from St. Catharines, the deputy government House leader.

Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to what I consider to be a very sad day in this Parliament when we time-allocate a bill that has not been consulted properly. Obviously, this bill was brought forward because this particular document came out: Careless about Child Care.

I want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain, who took the time to ask the Ombudsman to do a report on the inefficiencies that have come from this government through the Ministry of Education on child care over the last decade. When this report came out, the government bragged that they've already adopted something



like 30% or 35% of the recommendations in here. That is just the beginning of a number of problems that we have with Bill 10.

0920

I can tell you that I've heard a number of government members mention "after the minister consulted." The minister did not consult with any of the independent child care providers in Ontario. That is why in the first week back I asked our House leader to go to the House leaders' meeting and ask if we could have travel with this bill, because, of something like 800,000 children in the province of Ontario, about 75% to 80% of those children are looked after by independent child care providers. I thought maybe those people should have a say in this bill. Is there something wrong with that? Those are people from Thunder Bay, from Kenora, from Ottawa, from Pembroke—all across our province—and now they're sending in letters by the hundreds. They have rallies coming up. We've had a couple already; we're having more this weekend.

We know the government has made up their mind. They're running as fast as they can to try to cover up under this bill, under this Ombudsman's report. The quicker they can sweep it under the carpet, the better it will be, because they do not want those people, those 800,000 children who are under independent child care providers, to have a say. In fact, most of them across this province know nothing about this right now. There are literally thousands and thousands of families.

How many people will this put out of work, if we adopt this bill in its present form? Around 60,000 people; 60,000 people will be put out of work because they'll have to shut down their small businesses. Now, these are people who take in two or three or four children. It supplements their income and it helps out some of their neighbours down the street. They make, you know, \$1,000 a month or something like that. That goes towards paying their mortgage or their car payments or heating, and it helps provide the other families with a place to babysit their children. We've been doing that for years. I mean, that's something that's common in Ontario, and now what are we going to do? We're going to have a Ministry of Education police force, the enforcement division, kind of like that bunch of jokes at the College of Trades.

Mr. Speaker, that's where we've come in this province. We no longer care about what the average family thinks; we're going to be mama or papa to all of them. So what are we going to do? We're going to send out a police force. There will probably be—I can just imagine it now—little pink and blue minivans running around, and if they see some lady going down the street with a stroller for three, "Let's nail her. She's probably a villain. We can charge her \$200,000," or whatever the fee is that they're going to nail people with. It's insane.

All I ask for, Mr. Speaker, all I asked for from day one, was for this bill to be travelled. I know my colleagues in the NDP did the same. The whole child care division of the Ministry of Education has been a disaster

for the last decade, and we're going to clean it all up before Christmas? Give me a break. That will never happen. You know what? They won't put the resources into the enforcement, so what will happen? It will continue on exactly the way it is. Those independent child care providers who are looking after those 800,000 children today will be doing it underground, the same as what happens with the College of Trades or any of these other enforcement divisions.

It's amazing how we have to enforce everything with a separate division of its own—like the MNR. They've got the conservation officers, and the Minister of Natural Resources brags about that. You know what? They haven't got enough money for the gas for the trucks. They don't go out. The odd time they'll take a trip out to enforce hunting and fishing, because they don't have enough money in their budget. The same at College of Trades. We had to have that. What have they really done so far? They've just nailed people for more money, another tax. And what have we got? We've got people at the College of Trades who aren't as effective as homeless people on the street—they're completely useless to Ontario, as far as I'm concerned. And now we've got the enforcement division at the College of Trades.

You know what? Maybe they'll do some economizing here. They will have the enforcement division of the Ministry of Education to nail these child care providers, and maybe what we'll do is we can do some cost savings here and have the College of Trades guys help them. Can you imagine that going around: a guy with a hard hat, and it will be a blue-and-white uniform, a blue-and-pink uniform. You know, you can see it happening right now.

This is nothing but a joke, and this government is trying to push this thing through as fast as they can, because they do not want these independent child care providers across Ontario to unite and actually voice their concerns. The sooner we can get this thing done, the better it will be.

The deputy House leader mentioned very briefly that we're going to have night committee hearings. Well, I wonder if there will actually be teleconferencing allowed, because thousands of people will not be allowed to have their say on this bill because it is not travelling. So surely to God, Mr. Speaker, we'll allow people to conference call in from different parts of Ontario. Instead of sitting at night, I would have rather maybe taken a trip up to Thunder Bay with the committee and actually met some people, or over to Windsor, even during the House sittings.

As recently as yesterday, we were under the impression that the House leader actually had some strong feelings towards making this more open and transparent. Now, there's a word: transparency. This government brags about transparency. Can you believe the things that are happening under this transparent government? A hundred per cent of the bills so far are time-allocated. We've got a project like this MaRS project over here—another disaster. It falls in line with the transparency around the power plant scandals. Can you believe that?

We can't have those people in anymore to testify; the OPP know better. That's what we call transparency here, but we're going to pass a transparency accountability act. Let's give our heads a shake.

It's almost embarrassing, Mr. Speaker, to be elected and come here and have to sit in this House and listen to this garbage, because over and over again, they let the people of Ontario down by playing papa and mama to the citizens of Ontario. As far as I'm concerned, the people who know best about how to handle their children in the province of Ontario are the mothers and the fathers of those children, not Kathleen Wynne or any of the people on that side of the House. I think the average family takes a lot of pride in who babysits their children, or what daycare they take them to, and I think it's a disgrace that we not allow those people to say a few words at a time when there's an opportunity to really voice their concerns on a bill that will be, in fact, a bill that may last for many, many years. Let's get this thing right.

So will they really actually listen to amendments? I don't think so. There might be one or two. But you know what happens in these committee hearings: The opposition proposes an amendment, we do a lot of research into it and then the Ministry of Education bureaucrats give speaking notes to the parliamentary assistant to say why it's wrong. Now, keep in mind, the Ministry of Education bureaucrats are the same people who caused this Ombudsman report to come out in the first place. They didn't do their job in enforcement. So whatever we hear coming from the parliamentary assistant when it comes to the amendments we propose on the bill, we know that it is the same people who made this up, that are the result of that happening.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words this morning. I think you probably know where I stand. I'm embarrassed to say I sit in this House and to time-allocate a bill that should have travelled across this province—how many weeks are we really out, Mr. Speaker? Think about it. We're about in the middle of November—sorry; the first week of November now. With the time allocation, we won't get this bill passed until sometime maybe around the first or second week of December. All I was asking for was to travel in the winter months. We're back here anyhow by Family Day, which is the middle of February. They could have done their clause-by-clause and third reading then. We're out seven or eight weeks at the most. That's all we're out. That's all I asked for, as the critic for education. And what do we get? We get time allocation.

We're batting 100% on time allocation. That's obviously the way this government is going, and I guess we're going to have to put up with this. They have the majority, and I guess in four years the people will decide whether they like time-allocated motions and to be treated, basically, how some people are treated in Ontario, which is in a very poor manner.

I have hundreds of letters and emails coming into my office right now. I wish I could read them all. But those people will try to be present at rallies; they'll try to be at

some of the committee hearings. Maybe there might even be a demonstration or two here at Queen's Park. But the reality is, this reminds me a lot of the horse racing industry, how they handled that. Remember that? The casino modernization plan—boy, for a few weeks there, the finance minister and Paul Godfrey and these guys were going to change the whole world. There were going to be casinos everywhere. They were fighting about whether it was going to go in Vaughan or Toronto or Niagara or wherever. Whatever happened to that? Nothing. Nothing happened, because they didn't realize that people were tapped out for the kind of money they were gambling.

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What have they done in the meantime? They've destroyed the horse racing industry. About 40,000 jobs are now gone out of that industry, impacting everything from the people who grow hay and sell it to the farms, right through to veterinarians etc. That's the sort of thing we get when we don't listen to the opposition. You didn't listen then and we destroyed the horse racing industry; now we're going to drive the child care industry underground in Ontario because of this bill.

I thank you for the opportunity. I know that other people in my caucus want to speak later on. I appreciate the opportunity. We will continue to fight on behalf of the child care providers in Ontario and on behalf of the children in Ontario who deserve nothing less than a strong opposition to this pathetic bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Simcoe North. Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I want to start this debate by saying an old saying that we have in French, which is: *Le plus que ça va, le moins que ça change*. In other words, in English, the more that things happen, the more they don't change. That's what we've got here. We have, essentially, the holdover from Dalton McGuinty coming into this new government, which is now led by Kathleen Wynne, when it comes to how we operate this Legislature.

This government is proposing, by way of this motion—and it will pass because they have a majority—that everybody in Ontario who has something to say about this bill or something to say about the issue of daycare services in this province is not going to have an ability to do so if they don't happen to live in downtown Toronto.

I think that's a really sad statement because it is the Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, who said, on getting elected as the leader of the Liberal Party, as a new Premier in the last Parliament and again through this last election, that she was different, that she would do things in this province and she would run this administration differently than the Liberals had run it before under Dalton McGuinty. She kept on talking about wanting to have a conversation with Ontarians so that Ontarians could be in a conversation with their government so that we could hear them, said Kathleen Wynne, and what their needs were, what their anxieties might be and what their aspirations were, so that the government could properly reflect that in everything they do.

I think there's a certain amount of people who bought what the Premier had to say at face value. They said,



"She looks like a nice enough person," and I've got to say, from a personal perspective, I think Kathleen Wynne is a very good person. As a person, person to person, I think she's quite outstanding that way. But I think what we're starting to see in her leadership as Premier—there's starting to be little difference between her and Dalton McGuinty.

What the government is doing today—never mind that we members are not going to have as much time to debate in this House; nobody back home really cares about that. What people back home care about is that they have an opportunity to have their say on public policy when it comes to what this government does. The fact that this government, by way of this motion, is saying, "Unless you're able to get to downtown Toronto, to Queen's Park, on two days in November, you're not going to have an opportunity to have your say on daycare policy in this province"—there are people across this province who have issues when it comes to daycare, some of whom may agree with some of the items that are in this bill, as far as trying to regulate some of the unregulated daycare sector. But there's a whole bunch of other people who are saying, "Listen, my issue is real simple: I can't get daycare. I live in Kenora, I live in Cornwall, I live in Moosonee or I live in Sarnia, and I cannot get daycare."

What are we doing for them? What is this bill and what is this government doing for those thousands of families who are trying to get daycare services in their communities? That's really what's at question in this debate this morning. The crux of this debate and this time allocation motion, I believe—it's important, yes, for members to have their say in this Legislature and to have proper debate at second reading; I don't want to undermine that. But the real travesty in all of this is that the public is not going to have their say. If you live in Cornwall or you live in London or you live in Sarnia or you live in Sudbury, you're not going to have a chance to have your say when it comes to what's happening or not happening with daycare in this province.

For the opposition to ask, as has been the request for some time, to have some public hearings on this issue—I think it's a real travesty to the public. I think the public has a right to know and to have a say about what their government is doing.

What is this Legislature all about? Why is it that we have democratic elections every four years? Why are we sent here? We're sent here to represent the people, but it doesn't mean to say that once we walk into the door, we slam the doors to the Legislature and we say to the public, "You can only put your nose to the window and dream of having your say and hope that somebody happens to mention in this chamber what's important to you."

What you need to do is bust the doors open and allow, as we used to in this Legislature once upon a time, committees to travel, and to be able to go to where people live and to say, "What do you have to say about this?" Sometimes, you'll be surprised to hear what they have to

say. I know that I travelled on committee a number of years under the old rules, where there was no time allocation, where there were no limits when it came to debate. Governments had to send bills out on the road to be able to hear the public. Guess what used to happen? People used to come and give us ideas. People would point out and say, "You've got a good idea in your bill, government,"—whoever it might be; and I've seen it from all three parties—"but here's a suggestion of how we can make your bill better." Or, "Here is something that you may have forgotten about," or, "Here is the reality that I have to live in my community that you're not taking into account in this bill." It allowed the legislators, the members of the committee, to do what it is that we're sent here to do, and that's to properly represent the public of Ontario and to take their ideas and to try to work our way through everything we have heard so that we can try to make the bill reflect the wants, needs and aspirations of the people of Ontario.

The moment that you close those Legislature doors and you don't allow the public to have their say about what happens when it comes to legislation is a bad day for democracy in the province of Ontario. And it's a bad day and a sad day for the rest of Ontarians.

Oh yes, the government will say, "We've given you two days of hearings." I'm going to tell you what they're going to do. They're going to say, "We gave you"—I think it was—"from 3:30 to 6 o'clock"—I'm looking at my whip to help me out here—"and from 6 o'clock to 9:30, two days running, to have public hearings here at Queen's Park on daycare." I can almost guarantee we're not going to fill all the slots because we're only going to be asking for people who can get into Toronto to have their say. If you happen to live five blocks down the street or maybe you're somewhere down the subway from Queen's Park or maybe you're an hour's car ride from Toronto, you'll have an opportunity to come and have your say. But all those people who are living in London, Sarnia, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Cornwall and Ottawa, they're not going to be able to get down here—most of them don't have the means to get down here in the first place—to be able to have their say. So we're going to limit 80% of the geography of Ontario and probably around 40% to 50% of the population of Ontario to have their say about this bill. Why is it not as important to know what the people of London, what the people of Sudbury, what the people of Cornwall and what the people of Oshawa have to say? That's what this place is all about. And the government says, "Oh, look at us. We're being generous. We're going to give you two long days of hearings in Toronto."

I'm sorry, Ontario is just not Toronto. Toronto is important. Ontario can't operate without the city of Toronto. This is not an anti-Toronto thing. Toronto is key to the success of Ontario, but so is the rest of Ontario key to the success of Toronto and the success of this province. If we as legislators allow the government to say, "The only people that we want to hear from are those people in

close proximity to the city of Toronto,” I think that is a real mistake.

I would propose that what we need to do is give some time for this committee to be able to travel outside of the GTA so that the people in communities outside of the GTA, as selected by the committee—and leave this up to the committee—are able to say, “Yes, I want to have my say,” and have an opportunity to come forward.

With that, and with my brand new rhinestone glasses—because I broke my glasses and these are my cheaters; I don’t want anybody thinking this is a new style—I want to propose an amendment to the motion. Speaker, I will send you a copy of the same. It reads as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the second paragraph and substituting the following: “That the committee shall travel for up to five days outside of Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings, as determined by the committee.”

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Mr. Bisson moves that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the second paragraph and substituting the following: “That the committee shall travel for up to five days outside of Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings, as determined by the committee.”

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Back to the member from Timmins–James Bay for further debate.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To be clear, at this point I’m now speaking to the amendment to the motion, but I’m still allowed to speak to the main motion.

The reason we’re putting this forward is pretty simple. As I laid out in what I was saying in the few minutes I had preceding this particular motion, it is of paramount importance that the public of Ontario has its say. If the government is not going to see it in their own hearts to be able to do what they’re charged to do, and that is to give the public an opportunity to have their say, it’s incumbent upon us as the opposition to push the government in that direction.

I know the government has said no to the proposal of having 10 days of hearings, which was proposed by the official opposition. We felt it was important to come up with some kind of compromise and that the compromise be that, in fact, there be allowed five days of travel outside of the GTA for the public to have their say. It’s not a lot, but it’s something that I think is reasonable as far as being able to give some communities in this province an opportunity to have their say.

The people to determine those communities to have that would be the committee, as we always do. The sub-committee would meet. They would look at where there are areas of interest that want to speak to this geographically and say, “We have five days of hearings outside of the GTA.” They can figure out where they’re going to travel in those five days. They may decide to split morning and afternoon in one community or the whole day in a particular community. I would hope that if this motion passes, and I’m hoping that the government will allow

this amendment to pass, there would in fact be some travel in the various regions of this province, that we wouldn’t just do it in one region. We need to make sure the southwest, the southeast, I would argue northern Ontario—that we find some mechanism of making sure that we can get the committee out to those particular communities to be able to do this.

The government could do this, if it chose to, and if they really wanted to, we could probably do it before Christmas. I would argue that it would be better to do it after, but if the government is really bent on trying to get this thing done before Christmas, there’s enough time legislatively to be able to do that. We’re coming up to a constituency break. The committee could travel during the constituency break. We could have a discussion at the House leaders’ meetings in order to allow the committee to travel during the time of the House sitting. It’s not something that we’ve normally done. It’s not something I’ve normally been in favour of but, like everything, you’ve got to find a way to compromise and work across the aisle to say, “What’s the compromise to get this done?”

I say again where I started from, it’s the Premier who sets the tone. It’s the Premier, Kathleen Wynne, who said she wanted to lead a different type of government. She wanted the public to be engaged in debate with their government and this Legislature. She was going to have a conversation with Ontarians about the issues that mattered to them. Well, you cannot just have a conversation with yourself. To have a conversation, it has to be engaged with somebody else and that somebody else, I suggest to the Premier, is the people of this province, to give the people of this province the ability to say what they have to say about daycare.

On the issue of daycare, I will guarantee you, there are people across this province who are struggling to find affordable, accessible, safe daycare for their families and are having difficulty doing so, and I’m sure, to that issue, people will want to speak ad infinitum.

But I also suggest, to the central part of what this bill is all about, and that is regulating the unregulated side of daycare, there are people who are going to have some thoughts about how that should or should not be done according to what the government has put forward.

I would argue the way to go is to increase the not-for-profit side, such as what Thomas Mulcair and the federal NDP are proposing to do. I think that’s where you go. It’s rather unfortunate that this government has done hardly anything on that side in the 10 or 11 years they’ve been the government. Oh, yes, the government likes to speak a good line. They like to invent bills that have wonderful titles to make the public feel as if, “Oh, yes, our government is taking care of you. We’re going to do something about daycare.”

But I propose that this particular bill is not going to do anything for somebody somewhere out in Ontario who’s trying to get a daycare spot for their child. This bill is not going to create new daycare spots. It’s going to deal with how we regulate the unregulated sector and, if anything,



it might make access to daycare more difficult depending on how the private sector reacts when it comes to these particular measures in the bill.

Our motion is pretty clear. We've put an amendment to the time allocation motion that the government has put forward. This is not about my right as a member to have a debate in the Legislature, although I think that's important. This is about the people of Ontario, and if the people of Ontario cannot have their say when it comes to what's in a bill, then I think it is short shrift to democracy. I think it's the government not recognizing their responsibility and making sure that the public should have the right to have their say.

Again, I say I will be surprised if we fill all of the spots in the two days that the government has given us, because they have said, essentially, "You've got two days of hearings in Toronto." You know what? There's a lot more people in this province than just downtown Toronto, and there are all kinds of people in other communities who won't be able to come here, who would easily fill those spots if we could get out to their communities. So I would ask the government and I ask the official opposition to support our amendment and to make sure that this committee is allowed to travel for up to five days outside of the GTA so that we can hear the other people, really important people of this province, when it comes to what they have to say on this particular issue. With that, I'll leave the rest of the time for our caucus.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Timmins—James Bay. Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's a pleasure to speak to the amendment. I want to thank the member from Timmins—James Bay for making that amendment. Our critic, the member for Simcoe North, Mr. Dunlop, was pretty clear on what our request was: We've asked for travel around the province. In fact, at one of the previous House leaders' meetings, I read a letter to the government House leader; I showed the government House leader a letter from my critic dated October 20, addressed from Garfield Dunlop, MPP, Simcoe North:

"Dear Mr. Clark,

"I have received a significant amount of negative feedback on Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I hope the House leaders can unanimously agree to allow the committee to travel this winter so that families all over Ontario who are impacted may have a chance to voice their concerns about the bill."

I was very clear to the government House leader what our intentions were. I gave him very specific suggestions on the cities that we would travel to. In good faith—and I want to stress that: "good faith"—I communicated directly to the government House leader what our caucus asked for, and I want to thank the member from Timmins—James Bay for putting an amendment forward that reflects what our caucus request was.

I want to tell him that I'm going to support the amendment that was presented. I think it's extremely important.

I thought, Speaker, right up to yesterday afternoon that we were still negotiating with the government. Yesterday afternoon, during debate of Bill 10, I walked over to the government House leader and was talking to him. So either he is an expert at bargaining in bad faith or the Premier put the iron fist down on him and negotiations were over.

You know, this government and the deputy House leader—the dean of the Legislature, the member for St. Catharines—Minister Bradley, talked about Mike Harris and used the statistic of 60% time allocation. The difference is that we've had three bills that we've communicated to the government on; we've had three time allocations. This government is batting a thousand. I know Mr. Bradley is a bit of a Blue Jays fan. He's batting a thousand when it comes to time allocation motions.

I'd have more respect for this government if they would just level with the opposition, if they would just tell us exactly what their plan is. At least with Mike Harris, he would tell you what his plan was. He would look you in the eye and say, "This is what I'm going to do." This government says one thing and does something completely different.

In the two previous time allocation motions—I talked about our House leaders' meeting. The government was very clear to Mr. Bisson and me. They gave us four bills that they wanted to get passed very quickly in this session. What they asked was that we have a couple of hours of debate in the Legislature, we go into committee for a couple of days of hearings and come back for two hours or so of debate at third reading and get them passed. So I took it to our caucus. I asked our caucus if they had any concerns. Mr. Dunlop immediately, even though Bill 10 was not on the list, gave me this letter regarding Bill 10, as the critic, and asked for committee hearings. I'll come back to that.

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So we communicated that there were a couple of bills that we wanted to have hearings on. Bill 15, the auto insurance bill: We felt there were a number of tow truck operators and storage companies that wanted to be heard—fair and reasonable, Speaker. We wanted a few days of hearings outside of this building, outside of Queen's Park, so that we could hear from people who had concerns with the bill.

We also indicated that we wanted committee travel on Bill 21 because of the blood plasma aspect of that bill. In fact, there were stakeholders who were here in the building on Thursday. They sent me a letter regarding having province-wide hearings—very specific, Speaker. I'd have more respect for the government if they just looked me in the face on Bill 21, and all of those stakeholders—there are a number of groups across the province—and just level with them and tell them exactly what they're going to get in terms of hearings; none of this, say one thing and do something else.

We had a very important debate in this House yesterday afternoon about Bill 10. I put some of my constituents' comments and concerns on the record. I've already

had emails this morning from a constituent who is in the child care business in her home and very concerned about the future.

The member for Simcoe North hit the nail on the head when he talked about the number of providers out there who will be affected by this legislation: 70,000—we estimate up to 140,000 spaces.

I don't know what it is about this government that they have to put up a wall between the two opposition parties. Having five days of hearings is not unreasonable. I was very sympathetic to the government House leader and his concern about the regulations that will need to be put in place after Bill 10. The member for Simcoe North and I had a conversation here yesterday, and we were saying, "If there are some concerns about the regulations, then maybe we should meet in the intersession. Maybe we should try to schedule some hearings while the House is sitting," which is exactly what Mr. Bisson just said. It's exactly what I said to the government House leader. I said, "I think we've got some movement on these hearings. Can you get back to me?" At no time did he indicate anything about a time allocation motion. In fact, I was shocked to have one of the Clerks at the table hand me, probably less than an hour after I had that last conversation with the government House leader, the fact that we had this hammer put down on us.

I just can't understand why we can't work on these committees and meet outside this place. I joked, with my first time allocation motion, about the Premier's words where she talked about governing from the activist centre—I joked that she has renamed the Legislative Assembly "the activist centre" because everybody has to come to the activist centre if they want to be heard.

I heard the member from Beaches–East York talk about the government whip's comments on Skype and teleconferencing. This is a government that, by its own admission, is going to govern through teleconferencing. To have a motion—and thank goodness it was amended by the member for Timmins–James Bay—that provides two days of hearings—and this is the government's trade-off: that we're not just going to meet on the first day, November 17, from 2 till 6; we're also going to come back from 6:30 to 8:30. So here's a daycare provider in Ontario who looks after children all day in her home, and her only opportunity to talk about this bill is to call in between 6:30 and 8:30. Well, I live three and a half hours away. The top end of my riding is more like four and a half or five hours away. There's no possible way that somebody is going to drive in from Leeds–Grenville to make a deputation before the Standing Committee on Social Policy. There's no possible way.

So for the government to say, "Well, we're trying to accommodate people from 6:30 to 8:30 on November 17 and from 6:30 to 8:30 on November 18"—that's ridiculous. That's an insult in terms of a government that pledges it's going to be more open and transparent. There were a lot of empty words in the throne speech about openness and transparency, a lot of empty words, and the government is not putting any of them into practice.

We were fair and reasonable. The amendment, Mr. Speaker, is fair and reasonable: To allow us a few days of committee travel outside of this place, I think, is the only way to deal with this bill. It will signal to other stakeholders a willingness from the government to hear the other side, to listen to opposition concerns, and to listen to concerns from rural providers.

The Premier gets very upset when the urban-rural divide is discussed. But this bill, the way it's presently written, only adds to that division, because ridings like mine that are rural, that need as many child care options as possible, need to have the flexibility and not be imposed by the government.

I don't want any child care spaces decreased in Leeds–Grenville. I want the government to find ways to work with these existing providers. So how are we going to hear these existing providers? Again, the government has only provided four hours in the afternoon and two hours in the evening for two days. It doesn't make sense.

Mr. Bisson's motion to delete those words and to substitute "That the committee shall travel for up to five days outside of Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings, as determined by the committee," allows the committee—I'll use some words that the government likes to use: It will allow the committee to do its work. This motion will allow them to pick some locations that will give people a chance to speak on this bill.

The member for Simcoe North also talked about a number of protests that are going to take place, and I know that, because of the heavy hand of the government House leader, one is going to be scheduled in Ottawa, I understand. I don't know the date. I am going to allow the member for Simcoe North a few minutes to speak in favour of this and to reiterate his support for the bill.

Speaker, it's so important, in this majority Parliament, that we have an opportunity for the government to present its case on passing some bills. I want to put on the record again that we were supportive of letting a number of bills go through at a faster pace than normal in return for some minor committee travel. That didn't happen. This amendment will allow us that opportunity to travel to at least five locations outside of this city to give those rural daycare providers who are going to be most affected by this bill the opportunity to have their words heard.

With that, I know that the critic wants to say a few words. I know the third party wants to speak as well. I'll just park myself for the moment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, I'm really proud of the member from Timmins–James Bay for having moved this very important amendment to this bill. It is important to make sure that everybody in Ontario has a chance to be heard.

When I found out that this bill was going to be time-allocated, I started to reach out to people who had connected with me, saying, "Listen, we have some issues with this bill. We have some good ideas to change it, to make it better." They wanted to be engaged. They wanted



to be part of the process, which is what all politicians want. We want to make sure that the things we do matter to the people we serve.

So I reached out to Karry Strelezki. She is a daycare provider in Lively in my riding. Well, for Mrs. Strelezki from Lively to come down to Queen's Park—here's what she says. I read from her email: "In regard to going to Queen's Park to present these problems, while it's something that I would love to do, unfortunately that would leave five families without daycare, they are my priority."

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This woman has been in the business of running a private daycare for over a decade, for over 13 years. She is known in Lively. She provides very good child care. She has some good ideas as to how to move this bill forward, how to change it to make it better, because she knows the business of child care.

If we do like the member from Timmins—James Bay is suggesting, if we travel, I guarantee you that Karry will come and she will present. You will get to hear from her first-hand the good ideas she has to make things better, to make this bill do what we really want it to do, having a strong network of child care that is secure for the children who go there, no matter where you live. But Karry, like everybody else from Nickel Belt, won't have an opportunity to be heard if the government has its way. If we listen to the amendment from the member from Timmins—James Bay, Karry will have an opportunity to be heard, and I guarantee you that this bill will be better. Her ideas are worth listening to, and she should be given a chance. Let's bring the committee to the north. Let's give people like Karry a chance to be heard, and the legislation we will move forward will be better.

I also heard from Sarah Lalonde. Sarah also has a daycare in Hanmer, in another part of my riding. I will put on the record basically the email she sent me: "As per our phone conversation"—I phoned her to let her know, "Listen, there's not going to be much debate on this bill; your only chance to be heard is to come down to Queen's Park."

When you live in Hanmer, coming down to Queen's Park is not an option. It is almost impossible to do this there and back in the same day. We just had eight inches of snow last Friday. Believe you me, you don't travel fast when there's eight inches of snow and not a snowplow to be seen. But here's what she says: "As per our phone conversation ... I promised a letter that you could read"—because she won't be able to come down. If we listen to the member from Timmins—James Bay, though, Sarah would have an opportunity to tell her story, to say how make this bill better. She goes on to say:

"I am a 24/7 daycare located here in Hanmer. I am very saddened by the deaths in private daycares. However, I'm upset placing blame on all unlicensed daycares. I am unlicensed, as I and my parents enjoy the freedom to do as the children wish and not required to follow a regimented schedule. I also do not want to pay a company to give me more paperwork and take" up to "30% of my income, because as it stands now, some days I only

make \$5 an hour, well under minimum wage, while I still have to cover all the running costs. I don't do this for the money but for the love of the children in my care.

"With putting age restrictions, I will have to give at least one family notice, and it would be very difficult to find care as your licensed centres that they will be forced into" close at 6 p.m. "Who will watch the children after 6?" Remember, she provides 24/7.

"I beg you to please look at all points and not the media. Licensed daycares could just as easily have a death in a centre. I don't think it is a matter of licensed or unlicensed but a matter of supervision and following through on complaints. As for being licensed, I would be more than happy to have someone come into my house and see how things are done. However, I want my program and flexibility and not garnish 30% of my \$5 an hour."

That came from Sarah Lalonde, who lives in Hanmer. Sarah has much more to say. I have two pages of emails that she has shared with me that I won't have time to read into the record, but if we were to travel this bill, she would come forward. Not too many child care providers have the experience that she has providing 24/7. I come from a mining community. Everybody who works in the mines works 24/7. The mines don't shut down for Christmas, for statutory holidays, for nothing. There are not too many child care providers who have the experience that she does, who are open on Christmas Eve, on Christmas Day, and look after those kids. Sarah does that. She is there 24/7. She has issues with the bill and she deserves to be heard.

I will put on the record some of what Karry also has to say:

With the Legislature and Bill 10 coming up for second reading, "I wanted to reach out to you again...."

"The proposed ratio of five children under 13 with a restriction of two under two, plus the inclusion of the provider's children under six (when children begin school at four years of age) is not a viable model. This is clearly an attempt to have independent providers either close their doors or work for an agency. We believe this is the government trying to absolve themselves of any perceived responsibility by the public.

"We believe the government is trying to distance themselves from independent providers because of the media and lobbyists' wholehearted support of for-profit agencies and centres. It is consistently suggested that independent providers are unqualified, offer substandard care and resist licensing and this bill clearly supports those misrepresentations. The reality is that many independent providers are early childhood educators or have a degree in child development, and the majority adhere to the five-under-10 ratio outlined in the current Day Nurseries Act, as well as apply best practices...."

"Up to 80% of Ontario's children are cared for by independent child care providers (ICPs). Where will they go if so many of us have to close our doors? Rather than making child care in Ontario safe, affordable and accessible this bill will make child care in Ontario less accessible and certainly more expensive.

"However, we would embrace a registry or licensing system for all home daycare providers in Ontario [which] would ensure that the bill's objective would be accomplished. Wait-lists for subsidized spots could be immediately reduced if independent providers were individually licensed. These registries could also develop health and safety standards that would have to be met in order to qualify for a licence. I would happily obtain a licence or become registered if either of those options were offered. Instead, this bill leaves room for only two choices: either operate my business at a loss" or work for a for-profit agency.

"I am opposed to essentially being forced to give up my business in order to join an agency that will take as much as \$12,000" a year "from my gross annual income. I will potentially have available spots and not be able to fill them with children because the child in need of care is not over two, potentially leading to a loss of \$20,000 in gross income. No family can survive this drastic reduction of annual income so the cost will be passed to parents at an average increase of 30%. Those providers that shut their doors will be facing an unemployment rate of 7.1%"—which is where it stands in my community.

"What will we do with the 350,000-plus children currently in independent home care who will be displaced when ICPs with young children have to [close] their doors entirely? Why are we being eradicated from this bill instead of recognized as equals to our sister agency providers and ECEs working in centres? I am entirely in favour of new standards that ensure the health and safety of our children, but this approach is extremely flawed, and will lead to a child care crisis in Ontario."

We held a press conference and they don't feel that they were heard. I encourage you to do what the member from Timmins—James Bay has said: Travel this bill to at least five communities in Ontario. Come to the north. Talk to those child care providers. Some of them have years of experience. They want to make the bill better and they have ideas on how to do this.

Le député de Timmins—James Bay a proposé que le comité prenne le temps d'aller écouter les gens à l'extérieur de Toronto. En ce moment, le gouvernement veut donner aux gens de Toronto l'opportunité d'être entendus. Mais l'opportunité d'être entendus à Toronto veut dire que des gens comme Karry et Sarah, qui viennent de mon comté et qui ont de bonnes idées, n'auront jamais la chance d'être entendus, parce que pour eux, c'est clair que de faire le voyage de Nickel Belt et se rendre à Toronto pour présenter pour une période maximum de cinq minutes, ce n'est pas quelque chose qu'ils sont capables de faire. Ça voudrait dire laisser les enfants, les familles de Nickel Belt, sans ressources pendant une journée complète.

Comme j'ai dit en anglais un peu plus tôt, M<sup>me</sup> Sarah Lalonde offre un service de garderie 24/7. Il y a beaucoup de personnes dans Nickel Belt qui travaillent dans les mines, qui travaillent dans les services policiers, qui travaillent à l'hôpital, etc., qui travaillent 24/7. Ces gens-là ont des enfants. Ces gens-là ont besoin de

garderies, pas seulement que du lundi au vendredi, de 7 à 5. Ils ont besoin de garderies 24/7. Cette dame-là offre le système de garderie 24/7. Elle l'offre pour des parents qui ont besoin d'aide. Elle a des idées pour que les choses s'améliorent, mais à moins que la proposition qui a été faite par le député de Timmins—James Bay ne soit adoptée ces femmes-là, parce que ce sont deux femmes, n'auront jamais la chance d'être entendues. Ces femmes-là ne sont pas capables de se rendre ici pour partager leurs idées, ce qui veut dire que, vraiment, ceux qui sont à Toronto auront la chance d'être entendus, mais tous ceux qui demeurent plus loin n'auront pas la chance d'être entendus.

Quand on vit dans une démocratie, quand on sait qu'il y a des gens qui veulent être entendus et quand on entend un gouvernement qui nous parle de transparence, de donner la voix et de respect de la démocratie, il me semble que le plus beau geste qu'on puisse faire pour respecter la démocratie est de donner aux gens la chance d'être entendus.

Tous les députés, j'en suis certaine, ont reçu des courriels et ont reçu des appels de gens de leur comté qui ont quelque chose à dire par rapport à ce projet de loi-là. Des garderies, il y en a partout; des enfants, des familles, il y en a dans tous les comtés; et des gens qui ont des idées pour rendre le système meilleur, il y en a à la grandeur de l'Ontario.

Faisons honneur à la démocratie. Faisons honneur au député de Timmins—James Bay, qui nous a donné la possibilité de faire le tour de la province pour que ces familles-là, les familles qui ont des enfants, et ceux qui offrent des systèmes de garderie, aient la chance d'être entendus. Ça, ce serait vraiment d'aller de la parole à l'acte. C'est facile de dire qu'on respecte la démocratie, mais de le faire, ce serait de respecter ce que le député de Timmins—James Bay a dit et de donner la parole aux gens.

Je me rends compte que c'est l'heure de me taire. Je vous remercie, monsieur le Président. Ça m'a fait plaisir d'ajouter ma voix à ce débat. Merci.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the speaker from Nickel Belt. Since it is almost 10:15, this House is recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** We have several guests with us in the members' gallery today: Chief Sara Mainville; Chief Patricia Big George; Mayor Roy Avis; Reeve Mike Hammond; Reeve Peter Van Heyst; Reeve Gary Gamsby; Councillor Dave Bruyere; Dan Kelly from Onigaming First Nation; and former page Mira Donaldson and her father, Guy Donaldson.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** It's my pleasure to introduce some folks we were with this morning at the Breakfast Club of Canada. First, Susan Wright—she's the Ontario director for Breakfast Club of Canada; Trish



Starling, the program and projects coordinator; and, last but not least, John O'Leary from Coca-Cola Canada. Thank you for your sponsorship.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** It's my pleasure to introduce some family here today: my wife's brother Rob; his wife, Jenn Aylsworth; and my beautiful nieces Izzy and Livy Aylsworth. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I would like to welcome for the first time to Queen's Park, Michael Smulders, a former constituent of mine from Windsor—Tecumseh who is now living in the riding of Willowdale. Welcome to Queen's Park, Michael.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have two introductions to make. First of all, we have here today three members of Renée Grenaway's family. Renée is a page from Davenport. I'd like to welcome Renée's mother, Sandra Grenaway; her great-aunt Joyce Barteck; and her grandfather Wayne Bradey. They are sitting in the members' gallery and I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

And I would be remiss if I didn't welcome and salute my uncle John Albanese, councillor for the city of Fort Frances, whom I spot here in the members' gallery.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's my pleasure to welcome grandmother to page Callum, Susan Robertson, his aunt Megan Robertson and cousin Leanne Marchand. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Today is a very special day. We have a number of people from the Rainy River district in my riding. Here we have mayors, chiefs, councillors and other delegates who are with us, including John Albanese; Dennis Allen; Gordon Armstrong; Patrick Giles; town of Fort Frances mayor Roy Avis; Big Island First Nation Chief Patricia Big George; Wendy Brunetta; David Bruyere; Jim Cumming; Guy Donaldson; and Mira Donaldson, a former page here.

We have Tannis Drysdale; Gary Gamsby; Geoff Gillon; Andrew Hallikas; Mike Hammond; Brenda Jodoin; Dan Kelly; Anthony Leek; Couchiching First Nation Chief Sara Mainville; town of Fort Frances CAO Mark McCaig; Ken Perry; Paul Ryan; Peter Van Heyst; Rick Weidenhoeft; Mike Willick; and Clayton Windigo. Welcome almost all of the Rainy River district to Queen's Park today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is there anyone left?

Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Research and Innovation.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's a great pleasure to welcome representatives from Contact North, Ontario's distance education and training network: Paul Taillefer, chair of the board of directors; Maxim Jean-Louis, president and CEO; and also Craig Brockwell, director for business development. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to welcome Jeanene White and Anna Malcolm, who are mother and grandmother of page captain Jamie White, here today to observe their daughter and granddaughter as page captain.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Speaker. You were looking over there. Is it here? I guess it's me.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce some folks from the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance: Jim Brandle, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre; Peter Lambrick, farmer, Halton region; Allan Thompson, mayor of the town of Caledon; Michael Wolfson, staff, city of Toronto; Kim Empringham, farmer, York region; Kathy Macpherson, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation; and Vicky McGrath and Melanie Williams.

On behalf of them, I would like to invite everybody to room 228-230 for a taste of the Golden Horseshoe from 12:30 to 1:30. Welcome.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Today, we welcome students from the Holy Cross Catholic school in Georgetown. As the Minister of Education knows, a new Holy Cross Catholic school in Georgetown is the number one capital priority for the Halton Catholic District School Board.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** It's my pleasure today to welcome a special guest here at the Legislature, Ron Elliot—he is the regional vice-president of OPSEU—and his guests. I want to say thank you for coming today, and good to see you.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It gives me pleasure to introduce Jamie Reaume of the Holland Marsh Growers' Association and Mary Fragedakis, who was recently re-elected as my city councillor. They're also here with the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance. Welcome, all.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would like to welcome Ron Elliot's guest, Eddy Almeida, who lives in my riding. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I noticed in the Speaker's gallery today one of our former, very distinguished members, Steve Peters.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** If you'll bear with me, I have a few introductions to do. With us in the Speaker's gallery, we have some former colleagues of mine in the field of education—retired principals and guests—Pat Degelman, Frank Degelman, Rosemary Prohaska, Janet Teakle, Ed Horvath, Stephanie Rount, and young Carter Rount, who always beats his grandpa at golf. Please stand.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We also have in the Speaker's gallery Errol Grundy; Nathan's grandfather from Brantford, who is my former EA. Thank you.

We also have in the Speaker's gallery His Excellency Raoul Delcorde, the Ambassador of Belgium to Canada. Please welcome our ambassador.

We also have in the Speaker's gallery—I've gone through a lot of tea today. We also have in the Speaker's gallery Mr. Chris Collins, recently elected Speaker, on October 24, of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick. Welcome, Chris.

And we have, from the riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, from the 37th, 38th, 39th—and Speaker of the 39th Parliament—Mr. Steve Peters.

I thank all of our guests.

It's now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier. You and I both attended the Ontario Economic Summit in Niagara recently. At that conference, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released an alarming assessment of your government's performance. Their guide, titled *How Bad Is It?*, confirms Ontario has an unsustainable structural deficit. They confirm that "Ontario's fiscal situation is becoming increasingly dire."

The chamber's report says interest payments will "further crowd out ... capacity to spend on programs" like health, education and transportation.

Premier, will your fall economic statement continue to show your deficit of ideas, your deficit of action and your deficit of hope, or will it address what the chamber says is "a clear case for urgency"?

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Given the tone and tenor of the question, I'm sure he is very, very pleased to know that on my recent trip to China, we have come back with \$1-billion worth of investments for Ontario and 1,800 jobs, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure he's very pleased about that.

We know that there is an urgent situation in Ontario. We know, and we ran on a plan that addresses that urgency. We ran on a plan that makes the investments that we know are necessary; that sets up the partnerships; that allows for the growth that we know is necessary; and, as part of that plan, there is a global trade strategy that allows us to bring investment to Ontario in order to grow, as we know we need to, to deal with the structural issues that we face.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, the chamber's annual survey shows business confidence in Ontario is eroding. And here's what else they had to say: The number of businesses who believe Ontario is restoring the fiscal balance is down; investing in innovation and competitiveness, down; in building a modern workforce, down. A perfect example of Liberal mismanagement is one of the chamber's key priorities, the Ring of Fire. Last week, the CEO of Cliffs resources said there is "zero hope" this massive economic opportunity will happen. He cited your lack of leadership and lack of a plan as the reasons why.

Premier, the chamber says you need to "fundamentally change" what you're doing. Will you?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's interesting, because as I have had the opportunity to work with Premier Couillard in Quebec—we have been talking about the similarities between the Ring of Fire investment and the potential for that and our commitment to infrastructure in the Ring of Fire—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Kitchener–Waterloo, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —and the Plan Nord that is in place in Quebec. As we had the opportunity to speak with investors and with businesses in China, who are looking at both Quebec and Ontario as vitally important places to invest, I actually see that there's a very different picture that we paint of the future for Ontario, and that's premised on the reality that right now—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You paint a picture, but it's not selling well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —we are the number one jurisdiction for foreign direct investment. The member opposite may think that it is to the advantage of his constituents to talk Ontario down. I don't agree, Mr. Speaker. I think we focus on our strengths and we build this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** You brought Ontario down, Premier. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce isn't the only group of job creators who are sounding the alarm. The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters released a survey showing 60% of their members do not believe your government is supporting investment and growth. They say high energy costs, the highest in North America—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy House leader, come to order.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** —and skilled-labour shortages make it difficult to compete and develop new markets. They cite the weak financial situation that you've created as a major challenge.

Premier, our job creators want a signal from you that things are going to change for the better. But you continue to ignore them. We are committed here on this side to creating the conditions to make Ontario first. Premier, why aren't you?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It is completely understandable that this member, who is a former PC finance critic, would want to distance himself from his policy of cutting 100,000 jobs. It's completely understandable.

But let's just look at the facts. Ontario's tax system is one of the most competitive in the OECD. Ontario is the first destination for direct foreign investment in North America, Mr. Speaker. We are number one in terms of direct foreign investment. Seven out of 10 of the world's largest technology companies are conducting research and development right here in Ontario. I take no lessons from the member opposite in terms of what we need to do to grow this economy. Cutting 100,000—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

Ten-second wrap-up.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Creating a Jobs and Prosperity Fund; building transit and infrastructure—

*Interjection.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:**—partnering with business: Those are the things that we are doing. They are bearing fruit, they are bearing success. I hope the member opposite will join the party.

#### MUNICIPALITIES

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My next question is also for the Premier. As the former mayor of the city of North Bay, I have spoken strongly about the role of local governments. Last week's municipal elections provide a fresh start to put local governments at the centre of the issues that affect them. The new mayors and councillors need to look beyond their cities and towns, because things you do here affect them at home. When you bring an aviation fuel tax, they lose jobs at home. When you bring a pension tax, their chambers tell us that 53% of their businesses are going to fire people to pay for it. The decisions you make with no consultation with local governments are hurting communities.

Will you continue to say you'll consult, only to surprise them with a new bill, Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there's probably—I'm going to make a generalization here, but I think there's probably not a government that has spent more time consulting with local leadership. On a monthly basis—a monthly basis—the ministry, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and ministers across this government sit down with leadership from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. They talk about the issues that the municipalities are bringing forward; they talk about legislation that is coming forward. In terms of consultation, we work very, very closely with municipalities.

I would just say that many of us are here on this side of the House because the people on that side of the House were part of a government that imposed downloading of costs and imposed amalgamations with nary a word to the leadership in municipalities. We've gone quite in the opposite direction.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, I know that the facts hurt. You passed the Far North Act without listening—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. Come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is warned.

Finish, please.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** You passed the Far North Act without listening to mayors and First Nation chiefs, and as predicted, 80% of the mills are now closed. You say one thing, but you do the opposite. You formed the Ring of Fire Development Corp. with no First Nations on board. You say one thing; you do the other.

Today, there are mayors, chiefs and citizens from the Rainy River district here. They chartered a plane and had to hold a media conference to get their message out because they know you're not listening. They're here with a message: It's about forestry. But instead of listening to the mayors and chiefs, you hastily scheduled a news conference at the same time as theirs. Premier, is that your idea of leadership?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm very glad that the delegation is here and I know that my ministers are going to be meeting with them.

In terms of consultation, specifically, the member opposite raised the issue of the Ring of Fire. In fact, we have worked very, very closely with the Matawa First Nations to make sure that there is a framework agreement in place, to make sure that First Nations are part of the consultation and the discussion all the way along.

The member opposite knows full well that the development corporation that has been set up has been set up as an entity that is now going to bring the partners on board to be part of that development corporation. I would say it is irresponsible for the member opposite to frame or to characterize the development corporation in any other way. It is an entity that is designed to bring in the partners—the private sector, the First Nations, the federal government—to work towards the development of the Ring of Fire, and he knows that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds—Grenville, come to order.

Final supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, you say you will consult, but you don't. You surprised Ontario with the closure of 10 provincial parks—again, no consultation. Tourists travelled elsewhere; communities took the hit. Realizing the impact, local municipalities offered to operate the sites themselves, and it worked. Had you only talked openly about your plans in advance and consulted them, there would have been no loss of revenue.

1050

Today you have got chiefs and mayors here, because you continue to create problems for them when they have the solutions. By dealing openly with municipal governments and First Nations, we can make Ontario first. They're right here, Premier. Will you meet with them, or will you continue to say one thing and do the opposite?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I have already said that my ministers are going to be meeting with this delegation. It's very important to me that we have this conversation and that we understand exactly what is going on in all of the communities across the province.

That's why, during the election, I was in the north a lot, compared to the Leader of the Opposition, who didn't go north of Barrie. I have made it my business, both as a

minister and as Premier, to go to the north to make sure that I engage with municipalities.

But I go back to my first point: We deal with and work with, on a regular basis, the leadership in municipalities from across this province. Ministers attend the meetings of the local groups. We have an ongoing and monthly discussion with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. We are engaged fully in finding solutions to the challenges that municipalities are confronting. The member opposite knows that, and he should be taking part in those consultations with us.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Page 46 of Hydro One's management report released this February shows that their distribution network brings in \$452 million in before-tax profits.

My question is a simple one, Speaker: Why is the Premier planning to privatize a public asset that serves 1.3 million customers and puts hundreds of millions of dollars in the provincial bank account annually?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, let's just go back to the premise of the question. The premise of the question that the leader of the third party is asking is that we should never look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and determine whether they are working to the best advantage of the people of Ontario. I just disagree with that premise. I think it's very important that, on a regular basis, we look at those assets and we make sure that they are working.

I made it clear when Ed Clark, who was the expert who was looking, with his team, at these assets—I made it clear that we wanted to retain those assets in the hands of the public, and we are doing that, and that is their advice to us.

But should we look at how they can work better? Should we look at them as a package and figure out how to optimize their value? Absolutely, we should, Mr. Speaker. It would be irresponsible to do otherwise.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Hydro One's distribution business puts money in the provincial bank account, every single year, that goes into hospitals, schools, all kinds of front-line services for the people of this province.

Not only will privatizing Hydro One's local distribution assets cut out a source of revenue, but it will push up the bills. That means everyone from local homeowners to businesses will see their electricity costs go up.

Privatizing electricity generation made hydro bills more expensive. Privatizing distribution will do exactly the same thing. So why does the Premier think that ratepayers should be paying more just to pad the profit margins of private energy companies?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Actually, the leader of the third party once again has got it wrong, because the parameters that we gave to Mr. Clark were that the revenue stream that is already in place either needed to

stay in place or needed to be enhanced, because we recognize—as she does, I suppose—that it's very important that that revenue that comes into the provincial coffers and is used for services to the people of Ontario remain whole.

If the leader of the third party chose to read the whole speech that Mr. Clark gave and look at the whole interim report, which will come out, she will see that the integrity of those revenue streams is whole, that there is an offset for that revenue that she's proposing, and that in fact the effects on the rate base will not be negative and will actually help people across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the more you look at the Liberal plan, the less it makes sense. The Premier is privatizing an asset that brings in hundreds of millions of dollars annually, and they're ignoring the lessons of history.

Privatizing electricity generation made hydro bills more expensive, not cheaper. Privatizing distribution is going to do exactly the same thing.

Will the Premier admit that her plan to privatize Hydro One's distribution assets will cost everyone, from homeowners to businesses, in terms of higher bills?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would ask the leader of the third party if she, then, does not agree with her member for Timiskaming—Cochrane, who has written that the Minister of Energy should encourage the OPA to renew the contract for private power that's generated in his own riding. I would also ask the member opposite, the leader of the third party, to explain whether she disagrees with her government's policy, when they were in office, when they signed nine private power generating contracts.

The reality is that we have asked experts to look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. We have said that we prefer—that we believe that those should be kept in the hands of the people of Ontario, but can they be optimized? Can we do better in terms of the value of those assets? We believe we can, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what we're going to do.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I asked the Premier to look at history's lessons, Speaker; that's what I asked the Premier to look at.

My next question, in fact, is for the Premier. The kraft mill in Fort Frances is at a critical point as we sit in this Legislature right now. If the mill gets purchased, it will create 1,000 jobs in that community. If the mill doesn't get purchased, the current owner will stop winterizing it and the mill may be lost forever.

By doing nothing, the Premier will kill 1,000 jobs. My question is: Why is this Premier putting the interests of one company ahead of 1,000 people in the northwest?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry is going to want to speak to the specifics, but I want to just say that our gov-



ernment has maintained open lines of communication with the town of Fort Frances since Resolute announced that they would be idling their Fort Frances operations. There has been a continuous engagement. Obviously, we're disappointed that this particular arrangement hasn't worked out, but that doesn't mean that we are abandoning the process. It doesn't mean that we are abandoning the community.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins—James Bay, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We will continue to work with the community. We will continue to work for solutions. The minister is engaged in that on a regular basis, and I believe the leader of the third party knows that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Crossroute Forest is a crown resource. Communities in the northwest are making a simple request: to ensure that forests in the region are sustainably managed to create jobs in the region. With the stroke of a pen, the minister can convert the sustainable forestry licence to an enhanced sustainable forestry licence so that the community and companies manage that forest together, but the minister has said that nothing is going to happen until 2016.

That is going to be far too late for Fort Frances. Will the Premier make a commitment right here and now to take action today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I thank the member for the question.

Speaker, the premise of the question is that if an enhanced sustainable forest licence was in place today, if those discussions had started a year ago—and quite frankly, if they had started a year ago, I still think it's unlikely that one would have been in place today, because the four priority areas that are being worked on still do not have one in place today.

But even if it had been in place, there is no guarantee—and the people from Fort Frances are aware of this—that that in any way would have facilitated a deal, a private sector deal, between two forestry companies.

MNRF staff and MNDM staff were at the table guiding the process, but at the end of the day, this was very clearly a business-to-business relationship. Fundamental to all of this is that the mill is owned privately. The company is not in bankruptcy; they own the mill, they own the asset. Clearly, they're fundamental to any deal coming together on this file.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The people of Ontario, the crown, own the forest. That's the point.

Communities across the Rainy River district are asking this Premier and this government to take action. The town of Fort Frances is asking this Premier and this government to take action. Local First Nations are asking this Premier and this government to take action. The

Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association is asking this Premier and this government to take action. There are people in the galleries here today representing the Rainy River district, and they are asking this Premier and this government to take action. New Democrats are asking this Premier and this government to take action.

**1100**

Will the Premier finally agree to take immediate action to create 1,000 much-needed jobs in Fort Frances?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Minister?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, thank you. You know, the member is right: We do own the forests, but what she doesn't acknowledge is that the system of tenure that exists today is the system that was put in place by the NDP in 1994. Forest tenure today is the system that they put in place in 1994 under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. Our tenure modernization in 2011 has begun the process of moving away from that tenure model.

First of all, unfortunately, it's not my belief or anybody's belief that 1,000 jobs would be created. There would be significant job creation if the mill were to reopen, but it wouldn't be 1,000 jobs. I'm not sure where that number is coming from.

Having said that, I understand completely the emotion that is attached to this decision. We have forestry companies in Thunder Bay. We live the recession, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and myself. We know how important it is. We will continue to work and do anything that we can to try and facilitate something positive at the Fort Frances mill and Thunder Bay.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, it has been 24 hours since I asked you to strike an all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace. Yesterday, you talked about being open to conversations and the need to be vigilant, but those are all vacant words with no commitment to action. What better way to demonstrate that this is a serious issue than by agreeing today to strike an all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace? Premier, when can we expect your decision on this matter?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In that 24 hours, I have actually taken some action. What I did was I spoke with the head of the OPS to determine exactly what procedures and protocols were in place. I have that information. I'm happy to share that with the member opposite. People need to know that there is a workplace discrimination and harassment policy in place that addresses prevention and reporting, a policy that also deals with violence in the workplace. That is within the framework of the legislation that is in place and the Human Rights Code.

The other thing that I did was I checked within our own Liberal caucus to make sure that the policies were in place, and there is, in fact, a policy for harassment and a

violence-free workplace that applies to our Liberal caucus. I'd be very interested in the House leaders actually having a discussion about what's in place in the other caucuses.

I think this is an issue that affects every single one of us. We need to make sure that the OPS, the private sector, our own caucuses and the Legislative Assembly have protocols in place, because I believe that this goes way beyond one incident—one person in one media outlet. This is a societal issue. This is a culture-of-the-workplace issue. I'd be happy to talk to the member opposite about that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Premier, this is a serious issue. We don't want you to play politics with it. Today, I did send letters to the House leaders to stress the importance of the issue and to formally request that we move forward with the all-party select committee to study sexual harassment in the workplace.

Now, yesterday, I brought to your government's attention again, for the second time, the issue involving an assistant crown attorney who was allowed to resign and given a one year's salary bonus rather than the Attorney General—your own Attorney General in your government—investigating the workplace harassment complaint made against him. You talk about policies. The problem is occurring under your own roof.

Premier, will I be receiving an affirmative response to my request for an all-party select committee today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think the member opposite knows perfectly well that I can't comment on a particular case, and she keeps raising that one case.

But here's what I believe about this issue, Mr. Speaker. I believe that this issue affects every single member of our society. I believe that no matter where we work, no matter where we live, we have to take action ourselves. We have legislative frameworks; we have regulatory frameworks. We have policies, and I am in the process of making sure that those policies are in place across government.

But the reality is that if every one of us in this House doesn't look to our own practice and doesn't look to our own colleagues and take responsibility for our own actions, then we will not make the cultural changes necessary.

I'm saying to the member opposite that I'm going to ask my House leader to raise this issue, to make sure that across this House, we have the correct—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## FOREST INDUSTRY

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** To the Premier: Today, over 30 elected officials from municipalities and First Nation communities across the Rainy River district have travelled 1,800 kilometres and are here at Queen's Park to tell the Premier what her government should have already done, which is take leadership of the Crossroute

Forest so that the Fort Frances kraft mill can reopen and put people back to work. They are literally fighting for the future of the Rainy River district.

Premier, this is a needless problem that has a very simple solution. We have a mill, we have more than enough wood, and we have a potential buyer. All we need to make this deal happen is for your government to reallocate this wood and tell Expera, the potential buyer, that we want their business. Premier, will you do that today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Once again, the premise of the question is that if there was an enhanced sustainable forest licence in place, a deal could have been consummated between the two parties. Speaker, I personally don't believe that that would have guaranteed anything. It doesn't mean we're not trying to work in that regard.

What I would say to the member is that security of supply was not the issue. There was a supply agreement offered to the—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You can't finance yourself without the wood.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins-James Bay will come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** For the second time, the member from Timmins-James Bay will come to order—last time.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** There was a supply agreement offered to the company that was interested in purchasing the facility of 740,000 cubic metres per year. That's allowed under the terms of the existing sustainable forest licence, so security of tenure was not at issue.

The enhanced sustainable forestry licence piece, once again, would not necessarily have guaranteed anything. The mill is privately owned, and that's where it sits today. We still continue to look for opportunities on behalf of the community of Fort Frances.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** This is not a business-to-business problem as the Minister of Natural Resources states. The only business-to-business dealings that are being made pertain to the physical mill structure. The biggest holdup to this deal is the wood allocation, wood that belongs to the people of this province. This wood doesn't belong to a company. It is our wood, and it should be used to keep our local people working.

Premier, you can fix this problem with the stroke of a pen. We have three weeks to get this right before the mill assets are damaged by not being heated this winter. Premier, will you fix this injustice for the people of Fort Frances and put our deserving town back to work before it's too late?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?



**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Once again, I fundamentally disagree. It was a business-to-business deal that was trying to be negotiated between someone who privately owns a mill and someone who was trying to purchase, potentially, the mill and get other assets to reopen the facility.

MNRF staff and MNDM staff were there at the table, guiding the process only. It was not our deal to be made. We were trying to do what we could to help.

I would say to the member, and to the members of the third party who are interested in thinking that the eSFL process would have necessarily guaranteed a deal, that today, currently, in the member's riding, there are companies that want to see an SFL put in place for their particular operation so that they can reopen and create more jobs in the member's community.

There is no perfect system when it comes to tenure. We've made a commitment through legislation to move forward with modernization. That is occurring. But at the end of the day, it does not guarantee that we can land a deal between a business and a business. That is, unfortunately, the reality.

1110

#### SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAMS

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** My question is to the Minister of Education. We all know that a nutritious breakfast is critical to the success of every child's development. Eating a healthy breakfast has lasting physical, mental health and educational benefits.

This morning, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Children and Youth Services joined St. Joseph's College students for a nutritious start to their day. The minister also helped Breakfast Club of Canada, along with a corporate sponsor, Minute Maid, celebrate the 500th Ontario Breakfast Club opening this year. A healthy morning meal is now guaranteed to 90,000 students in Ontario schools, nearly 30,000 of them in the Toronto region.

Minister, can you let this House know what today's announcement entailed and how we are ensuring that all children have access to a healthy and nutritious breakfast?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the member from Beaches–East York for his interest in this very important issue.

Speaker, it's a top priority for this government to ensure that students are starting off their day with the support they need to succeed, and that includes breakfast.

The Breakfast Club of Canada was founded on the belief that every child has the right to succeed in life and, most of all, have safe and reliable access to food. A healthy breakfast helps with better student attendance, increased physical activity, increased self-esteem and improved memory and cognition.

Together with the Breakfast Club, across Ontario, we have reached over 90,000 students, and this year, 500 schools, and 13,567,525 breakfasts have been served—

and we were very pleased, with our partners Breakfast Club and Minute Maid, to serve more this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** This is a very exciting milestone and announcement you made today. I can tell you the success of the program is a priority for my constituents in the riding of Beaches–East York.

The club now has over 80 schools in the city of Toronto alone. In my riding of Beaches–East York, two schools take part in this excellent program.

We know that the benefits of the Breakfast Clubs go far beyond the school walls. Evidence shows that schools with programs see improvements in attendance and punctuality, as well as in behaviour and concentration, and they help turn young people into better citizens.

Minister, can you please tell us how our government is helping to support the Breakfast Club with their initiative to provide nutritious breakfasts to students across Ontario?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** It was great to be at the 500th opening of Breakfast Club of Canada. Minister Sandals was pouring the milk; I was pouring the juice and handing the fruit out. It's good to know we have other jobs if we need them. It is a really great program, and thanks to our partners for making that happen.

Our government, as you know, Speaker, announced an investment of \$32 million over the next three years as part of our five-year plan to expand and enhance our Student Nutrition Program, and an additional \$10.3 million will be invested in the program this year and next. So the total funding is \$31 million. That's 340 new breakfast programs. It is to establish programs where there are higher needs, so it's very focused—56,000 more children. It's fantastic. We're committed to making sure that students in Ontario start their day off right.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question this morning is to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Minister, as you know, the role of the Fairness Commissioner is to make sure that everyone who is qualified to practise in a regulated profession can get a licence to practise here in the province of Ontario.

We have learned that in the last 15 months, the Fairness Commissioner, Jean Augustine, has expensed over \$3,400 in limousine rides to Ontario's taxpayers. Nothing is too small for this government's appointee to expense. On a flight to Halifax, she even billed taxpayers \$3.40 for her airplane headphones. Clearly, the eHealth and Pan Am style of entitlement is alive and well in this ministry.

Minister, why are you allowing the Fairness Commissioner these entitlements at taxpayers' expense—or do you agree with them?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you very much for the question. The Ontario fairness commission is an arm's-length agency of the Ministry of Citizenship,

Immigration and International Trade. We have no involvement in the day-to-day operations of her office.

The government of Ontario has a number of rules and regulations regarding expense accounts put in place to protect the people of Ontario—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Are you washing your hands of it? Are you suggesting you have no oversight?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** —and promote fairness across all levels of government, including agencies. We expect everyone to adhere to these rules, particularly those in a position of authority, whom we expect to set a positive example for others to follow.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the minister: Minister, you should also know that while on a \$6,300 trip to Finland last September, this appointee made taxpayers cover the cost of a personal sightseeing tour. We all know that the Fairness Commissioner was appointed in exchange for giving up her seat to the failed federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff.

This government talks about transparency, yet the only way we were able to learn about this shocking abuse of public money was through a freedom of information request. It doesn't seem like the Fairness Commissioner is being very fair to taxpayers in this province.

Minister, will you order her to post her expenses online, or are you going to continue to allow her to abuse taxpayers' dollars by expensing limo rides, airplane headphones and sightseeing tours?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Again, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner is an arm's-length agency of the government of Ontario. However, like all agencies, under the agency accountability and establishment directive, it must comply with the guidelines set out in the travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive and other spending guidelines.

These guidelines have been communicated to the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. The Fairness Commissioner has a mandate to ensure that the regulated professions in Ontario have practices that are transparent, objective and fair when determining who is allowed to practise in these professions. The office is accountable for using government funds with effectiveness and economy for the purpose of fulfilling this mandate.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. The last few months have shown that sexual violence for women and impunity for powerful men remains a reality in Ontario.

Today, we learned that doctors can sexually assault women during examinations and return to practise medicine without requiring the college of physicians to inform the police. And if you are a crown attorney facing sexual harassment allegations, the government will give you

double your annual salary as severance; all you have to do is resign.

Can the government explain what it will do to end this culture of impunity and create an Ontario where sexual harassment and sexual assault allegations are taken seriously and acted upon?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I have already indicated in response to a couple of other questions, this is something that I and our government take very, very seriously, as I hope everyone in this Legislature takes it seriously. Whether it's at work or at home or in the community, whether it's public service or private sector, we all have to be vigilant in terms of our practice.

There are rules and regulations in place. In fact, in 2009, our government actually brought in changes to strengthen the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address workplace violence and harassment.

We will continue to monitor the legislation and the rules, but I would say to the member opposite that I think it goes beyond that. I think it goes beyond the frameworks that are in place, that have to continually be improved. We have to look to our own practice, to our own communities and to our own workplaces, and make sure that we have the practices and behaviours in place in those places that keep ourselves and our colleagues safe.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Beyond monitoring, there are specific ways this government could address violence and harassment faced by women now.

For example, yesterday we heard that some journalism students were warned against internships at Q with Jian Ghomeshi. We know that interns are vulnerable. They fear reprisals or damage to their careers if they report inappropriate or even illegal conduct by their employers. I've tabled a bill that would allow interns to anonymously report inappropriate conduct.

This is one simple measure the government can take now, but much more needs to be done to make violence prevention an all-of-government priority.

1120

Will this government move immediately to update Ontario's Sexual Violence Action Plan to include real goals, real funding and real progress so that it offers real protection for women today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** As the Premier said, sexual violence—and abuse of any kind—is a very serious issue. We all take it seriously. I find it completely unacceptable, and it is something that we all have to think about here in the Legislature, in workplaces and beyond, because sexual violence has a devastating impact.

We have many initiatives and programs. We have a \$15-million Sexual Violence Action Plan. We also have additional money to support sexual assault centres.

I want to say here what I said outside the House, Speaker: If people are facing abuse, I encourage them to go to the authorities if they can. I encourage them to go



to support groups if they can. I encourage them to go to their unions if they can.

There are many protections. Interns are covered by the Human Rights Code and employer policies. There are many, many progressive policies in workplaces that require employers to respond to formal and informal complaints of abuse. It's something we all have to take seriously. We're working on it, and we will continue to invest in this.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. On August 4, extreme flooding hit my riding of Burlington as well as areas in the riding of my colleague the member from Halton.

The city of Burlington received nearly 200 millimeters of rain in five hours. That is equal to the total rainfall usually received in the months of July and August. This flash flood caused damage to more than 3,000 homes throughout Burlington.

In August, Burlington city council passed a resolution requesting assistance under the private component of ODRAP for assistance to individuals for essential expenses not otherwise covered by insurance. The city of Burlington has been working together with Halton region to help the people of Burlington affected by this natural disaster.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of the community spirit that has flourished throughout Burlington as a result of this extremely successful fundraising on behalf of those who need it most.

Minister, will you please provide an update on the status of Burlington's application?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I want to thank the member from Burlington and also the member from Halton for keeping our ministry apprised of what has been going on there, and the tremendous community efforts.

I know how difficult it is for communities to try to deal with disasters. In that context, it's our government's first priority to ensure that residents are made safe in the event of a disaster.

ODRAP is provided to communities where damages exceed the financial resources of the affected individuals and municipalities. In the case of Burlington, the most severe damage was felt by individuals. When reimbursing individuals, ODRAP's role is to ensure that essential needs, like access to housing, food, medical response and heating, are met.

I look forward to being kept apprised and, hopefully, we will have some news soon on the application.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? The member from Halton.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I, too, saw the extensive flood damage and felt the frustration of my constituents living in the Burlington part of my community. I knocked on residents' doors with officials assessing the devastation, and saw first-hand the widespread destruction in

some neighbourhoods: flooded basements, waterlogged furniture and garbage bags full of ruined clothing. Perhaps most memorable, though, were the stories of loss and the looks of despair on people's faces as they dealt with the flood destruction.

Confusion often surrounds the decisions which designate some communities eligible for ODRAP and denies others this assistance. Eligibility requirements are dependent on the particular characteristics of a given disaster event, and this can lead to assumptions that the program is inconsistently administered. The length of time required for provincial funds to flow is also under scrutiny.

Mr. Speaker, how does the minister plan to respond to the many questions that often surround the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Speaker, I certainly agree with the member's observation that our climate is changing. In fact, perhaps, a little-known fact: 28% of all insurance claims settled today are categorized as a response to a catastrophic weather event.

Her thoughtful comments and her hard work have led us to do exactly what my mandate letter calls me to do, and that's to look at ODRAP and review it, to make sure it meets the needs of local communities who experience disasters. I continue to welcome input from all members of the House in that regard.

We're going to examine the findings of our formal review, scheduled for completion next spring. Hopefully as a result of that we'll be in a better position to help communities experiencing climate change disasters.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Premier. Ever since four Ornge crew members regrettably died, the Ontario public has been looking to you to do two specific things: (1) stop denying the facts; and (2) start accepting responsibility.

Yesterday, your Deputy Premier told a CBC reporter that she did not know about the problems at Ornge until October 2011. May I remind you that on May 3, 2011, the Ontario Air Transport Association sent her a five-page letter alerting her to the egregious concerns at Ornge and urging her to act as rapidly as possible. We have now learned that her response to them was, "I'm too busy to discuss Ornge."

Premier, your deputy hasn't been truthful. She said she didn't know before October 2011, but her reply to the air transport association letter proves differently.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to caution the member and ask him to withdraw that one comment, please.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Premier, will you do the right thing and ask for her resignation today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment on this, but we've got new leadership at Ornge—a

new CEO. We have a new board of directors and we have a new senior management team at Ornge. It was our Deputy Premier who put those changes in place. She did that.

When the minister and our government learned of the issues coming out of Ornge, we took action. That is the reality. That is what happened and that's why there are so many changes at Ornge: because this Deputy Premier, when she was Minister of Health, took those actions.

We now have a piece of legislation in front of this House. We hope that the members opposite will support us in getting that legislation passed because it will make further changes in oversight to Ornge. We really do trust that, given the urgency coming from the other side, they will work with us to get that legislation passed as soon as possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Back to the Premier: What the second Ornge report really boils down to is an issue of ministerial and first ministerial responsibility. That's what this is about. What the public expects and demands is that you and your minister accept responsibility for the mismanagement and boondoggle of Ornge. They want to know if you think it's appropriate for a minister in these circumstances to have not just stayed on but to have been also promoted.

Just a few minutes ago in this House, Premier, you asked for responsibility and said that we should all be taking responsibility in this House. As such, I want to know about your standards. How many more people have to die, Premier, before you ask for that minister's resignation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It was nearly two years ago, in fact, when we introduced Bill 11, which was the air ambulance amendment act, to further improve oversight at Ornge. The bill was sent to committee more than a year ago. It was the PCs at that time who refused to allow hearings on that important act. The bill, as we all know, was left on the order paper when both the PCs and the NDP refused to support the budget and forced an election.

Mr. Speaker, we want, as the Premier—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just come to order. Finish, please; wrap up.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We're proud of the changes that our Deputy Premier has made to Ornge. We have more changes still to make; that's why we're looking forward to both opposition parties supporting us. We've reintroduced elements of that act under the accountability and transparency act. I hope that the opposition will work with us to get those important changes approved as soon as possible.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you will know that your House leader has moved a time allocation motion in order to move the

daycare bill in such a way that the public will not have a chance to have their say outside of the city of Toronto. You're the Premier who says that you want to have a conversation with Ontarians; you're the Premier who says that you want to include the voices of people across Ontario in whatever this government does.

We moved a motion this morning to allow the committee to travel five days outside of Toronto in order to hear the voices of the people of Ontario. My question to you is this: Will you support our motion and allow the voices of those people outside of this area to be heard on this issue?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

1130

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member opposite for the question. This is a very important bill. This bill is about protecting our children. The core essence of this bill is to make sure that our kids are safe when somebody else is looking after our children. I speak as a parent. That's why we cannot take any more chances in terms of tragedies that could be traumatic or fatal for our children. That is why the Minister of Education had tabled this bill some time ago in the previous Parliament: to ensure that we move ahead with protecting our children and making sure that our children are getting the best possible care, the kind of attention that we have put in our schools. We need to make sure that when it comes to child care, our children are safe at all times. That's what parents are asking us for, too, and we need to do that by passing this bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You say that you're a parent, a parent from Ottawa. Any parent in Ottawa will not get a chance to speak to this bill.

The question is simply this: Your government, under the leadership of this Premier, says you want to hear from Ontarians; "We want to engage in conversations with people across this province." We agree. We believe it's important to hear the voices of people from Ottawa, people from northern Ontario, people from the southwest and others when it comes to important issues such as daycare.

Our question is simply this: Will this government support a motion that will allow the voices of the people of Ontario outside of Toronto to be able to be heard on this issue so that their thoughts and their reflections can be seen in the final product of this bill?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I ask the opposition to stop playing politics when it comes to the lives and the protection of our children. This bill, at its heart, at its core and at its mandate, is about protecting our children. Partisanship should not be the one that should trump the safety and the security of our children when they are being looked after by somebody else within our community.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Some of you are not even in your own chairs. Don't insult the kids.

Finish and wrap up, please.



**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I laud the Minister of Education for bringing a very extensive piece of legislation based on very substantive consultations that took place. That's why this bill was tabled almost a year ago and has had ample debate. We need to make sure that we protect our kids.

## MINING INDUSTRY INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** My question this morning is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Just last week, the Ontario Mining Association hosted their annual Meet the Miners Day at Queen's Park. Plusieurs d'entre nous, moi-même incluse, étions fiers de rencontrer, de participer et d'apprendre le rôle incroyable que les miniers contribuent à travers la province et dans nos activités journalistiques.

I learned that Ontario has world expertise in mine financing, geology and engineering, stable exploration and mining industries and one of the lowest mining tax rates in Canada. We have the advantage of a strong economy, competitive business costs and world-class research and development environment.

Can the minister inform the House on the status of the mining industry in Ontario and its significance to our provincial economy?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Merci beaucoup to the member for Ottawa—Orléans for a really important question. May I say that on a day when the official opposition is talking down the positive aspects of the economy, I think it's important that we get the facts out about the mining industry.

It was a great gathering at Meet the Miners last week. I think it's important to state that despite, certainly, the challenges within the sector, Ontario continues to be the leading jurisdiction in the country for both the exploration and the production of minerals in Canada, and it's certainly a major player across the world. It plays an incredibly important part in our provincial economy. The mining sector directly employs some 26,000 workers. In 2013, the value of mineral production in Ontario was \$9.8 billion. Ontario's mining supply and services sector: 50,000 workers employed and \$10 billion in output.

I look forward to giving you more details during my supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** It is part of our government's plan to build Ontario up by creating a dynamic and supportive environment where business can prosper. The minister has made it clear that our government is doing just that when it comes to the mining sector. The global mining economy is evolving, and new competition is always emerging. I know that our government is committed to ensuring that Ontario remains a world leader in mineral exploration and mining investment.

Monsieur le Président, can the minister tell the House what our government is doing to maximize Ontario's

mineral potential and support a modern and innovative industry, ensuring that Ontario's mining sector continues to thrive for decades to come?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** That's another great question, Speaker. Being armed with a spectrum of solid data and well-researched information is crucial to an industry that requires innovation. Our understanding of the industry requires us to move forward. That's why our ministry, certainly, partnered with the Ontario Mining Association and another organization to provide support for research in that sector.

Two reports were released last week, one from the Ontario Mining Association, which actually spoke to the direct economic impact of a gold mine. It's a remarkable story. The details are worth getting into; I know I don't have time for that.

There was also a great report by the Canadian Association of Mining Equipment and Services for Export—CAMESE, as it is known by those of us in the sector—which actually talked about the incredible economic impacts of the mining supply and services sector, which I referenced earlier: up to 50,000 people employed and over \$10 million in total value input. It's a great story in the sector. Lots of challenges, but we're working and focusing on everything—and, may I say, including the work going forward on the Ring of Fire.

## FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the minister responsible for infrastructure. Why is it taking the minister so long to put together the list of infrastructure projects which he needs to submit to the federal government to receive funding under the New Building Canada Plan?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, I used to be a hockey player. When I went into the corners and somebody had their elbows up, they always got a little taste of the stick. And I want to put that analogy to use here.

The federal Minister of Finance was being very disingenuous yesterday when he suggested incorrectly that Ontario was in any way holding up the New Building Canada Fund. In fact, Mr. Speaker, since March, we've been waiting for documents from the federal government that, ironically, came two hours after I spoke out yesterday.

The Minister of Finance federally may be very embarrassed by this. The fact is, we're going to continue to invest in infrastructure. He should be embarrassed, when you look at the comparison between the federal investment in infrastructure compared to ours. We're investing \$130 billion over the next 10 years; the federal government is only investing \$70 billion, Mr. Speaker—and that includes their own buildings—through the whole country.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Even with all the bluster that the minister can muster, he cannot deny that there are nearly

\$11 billion on the table set aside to support infrastructure projects in the province of Ontario.

This government has insisted time and time again that infrastructure spending is their priority. They've made promise after promise: improved public transit in Toronto; all-day, two-way GO service through my riding; high-speed rail between London and Toronto; the Ring of Fire. The list goes on and on. Yet Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba have all submitted their lists. This minister continues to drag his feet.

Will this government get its act together and commit to getting its list of preferred infrastructure projects to the federal government by week's end?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I know it might be a little embarrassing for the member to have been so misinformed by his federal cousins, but the fact of the matter is, since March, we've been waiting for our draft agreement from the federal government. And it's going to come, Mr. Speaker. We were notified two hours after we spoke out yesterday, refuting the incorrect information that the federal minister had.

The fact of the matter is, we were the first province in this country to provide, for municipal infrastructure projects, an application process for small municipalities—the first in the country. We're eager to move forward with this program. All we've asked for is the draft agreement from the federal government. We've been asking since March; we haven't had it. Within two hours of us speaking out yesterday, miraculously it's going to come.

We'll keep working with the federal government, despite the fact that they're so undercharging infrastructure in this province. Their contributions are—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

The member from Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** On a point of order: I just feel it's very important that Hansard reflect that as of June 15, 2010, the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires all employers to have a policy regarding workplace harassment, which includes sexual—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That is not a point of order, and I should have jumped up a little quicker.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin–Caledon on a point of order.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I was remiss during introduction of guests. I see that the mayor-elect for the town of Caledon, Allan Thompson, has joined us. I would like everyone to join me in welcoming him.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kenora–Rainy River on a point of order.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I know it's hard to believe, but I think it's possible I may have left out one or two of my constituents. I'm pretty sure I missed out on Ken Perry, and there may have been some others. If I did overlook

anyone, I do sincerely apologize. I welcome everyone who has made the long journey here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound on a point of order.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to add to the roster the family of our colleague Michael Harris. Sarah, Murphy and Lincoln Harris all joined us in the members' gallery. I think they might have just slipped out, but they were here watching question period.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I don't see them just quite yet, but I would like to welcome to the Legislature Carmina Falkner and Natasha Mitchell from the region of Waterloo. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You can tell them they're officially in Hansard, anyway.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### TRUE PATRIOT LOVE

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It is my honour to stand here today to recognize the vital work of the True Patriot Love Foundation in support of our troops, our veterans and their families. While I feel it's always our responsibility as Canadians to honour those who stand heroically in the face of danger, recent tragic events have only served to reinforce this responsibility. I am heartened by the outpouring of support we've seen from every corner of the province.

Since 2009, True Patriot Love has embraced that responsibility, working to bridge the divide between the military and civilian worlds and filling the gaps for our Canadian forces that are inevitably left unfunded by government. True Patriot Love has dedicated themselves to fundraising initiatives, providing \$2 million to family health and support, more than \$1.5 million to assist our severely injured military members, and \$1 million to mental health-related programs for research, treatment, prevention and awareness.

In this time of heightened awareness due to the recent tragic events, True Patriot Love will be working to channel that awareness towards ensuring that our military families and veterans receive the support they deserve.

Tomorrow night, True Patriot Love will be holding their sixth annual Toronto tribute dinner, one of the key events to allow them to continue their good work throughout the year. I want to take this opportunity to thank them and the countless donors who have stood behind our military, our veterans—our heroes.



## MISSING PERSONS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Three years ago yesterday, Maureen Trask's son Daniel went missing. He was a frequent backwoods camper, but in Temagami in 2011, Daniel disappeared. His car, coat and backpack have been found, but not Daniel. Maureen doesn't know what happened to her son.

This is one of 16 active missing persons cases in Waterloo region and 370 cases across Ontario where there is no clear indication of criminal activity, as in Daniel's case. The Privacy Act prevents investigators from accessing information that may help locate missing persons.

Those who most often go missing are the most vulnerable members of our society—those suffering from mental illness or dementia, for example.

Maureen Trask has turned her grief into action. She is now an advocate for families of missing persons. She's responsible for new bereavement counselling groups in Waterloo to address ambiguous loss, the particular grief of missing loved ones.

My office has worked with Maureen on a petition advocating for a missing persons act in Ontario, similar to legislation that already exists in Alberta, Manitoba, BC and Saskatchewan. By working with the privacy commissioner, this government could maintain the balance needed between investigative information and personal privacy.

Too many families across Ontario are living in a state of uncertainty. As Maureen said:

"We're diametrically pulled in two directions. Is he alive or is he dead? Is he here or is he in some other country? You don't know.... You have to learn to live with that uncertainty and find a way to carry on."

We can help families like Maureen Trask's find out what happened to their loved ones, and we should.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** My uncle, Lieutenant Colonel Ted Shuter with the Royal Canadian Regiment, a Rotarian, died this summer at the age of 99. He wrote this poem 10 years ago for Remembrance Day. I'd like to read it in part:

The Canadian Volunteer.

Let us all at this time of year pause

To remember the fallen Canadian volunteers.

To arms! To arms! our leaders cried, and volunteers

In thousands promptly replied—that they might

Join the fight in a war which was just and right.

Conscription was not then a serious care

Because the volunteers were there.

They volunteered to die.

To die? Oh no, surely not you, dear comrades, nor I, but—

Some other guy?

We would go to do our duty, and to win honour and glory.

Well, honour and glory there may have been.

But the price of misery and death were too often seen.

So many "other guys" did fall, but you as well, dear comrades all....

Then came peace, and you were collected and moved with thousands more,

And laid to rest again in ordered rows, with crosses of stone and flowers galore.

I saw these places, both old and new; an awesome view,

And in the search, found the grave of the kid brother I hardly knew,

He volunteered, fought and died with those other brave men.

We blessed his cross at Adagem.

So there, in your thousands you lie, a sight to bring tears to any eye....

Though in foreign fields you lie

In the hearts of those who remain, you will never die.

But, as our numbers, over the years, must shrink,

We pray that others will continue to think, at times,

Of the Canadian volunteers who lost their lives over there

To preserve the freedoms for which we care.

So give a cheer, shed a tear, but at least this once a year—

Do remember and thank those Canadian volunteers

Who died for you.

## ANNIE UNDERHILL

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The wonderful thing about courage is that it shatters stereotypes. Courage comes in all shapes and sizes, in men and women, boys and girls, from all walks of life—people like Annie Underhill. Annie is a 16-year-old from Kemptville, whose big, bright smile in the face of some terrifying medical challenges is an inspiration to us all.

Last week, Annie, a grade 11 student at St. Michael Catholic High School, was named the 2014-15 Champion Child for the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Foundation and the Children's Miracle Network. There is no better person for this role than Annie. With her courage and positive outlook, she overcame every challenge thrown at her since being diagnosed with leukemia at age 4.

Now a Champion Child, it's Annie's turn to help other kids get through their darkest days at Children's Miracle Network hospitals like CHEO. Given what she has been through, her message to those brave children in treatment is to "keep your head up and remember that everything's going to work out." It can't help but resonate.

Annie's first duty, Speaker, will be a memorable one. She leaves Sunday with her mom and dad, Kim and Jeff, for Walt Disney World in Orlando to meet Champions from all across the US.

It's a great story made even better when the staff at the Kemptville Walmart gave her a surprise \$1,000 shopping spree for the trip.

Annie, all of Leeds–Grenville is so proud that you're showing the world your real courage and what we've all got inside of us. Thank you, Annie.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF SIKH MASSACRE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I rise today to speak on the 30th anniversary of the Sikh genocide, which began on October 31, 1984, and continued into early November, and resulted in the targeted killing of thousands of Sikh men, women and children in the capital city of New Delhi and across India.

Even after 30 years, misinformation regarding the events of November 1984 continues to impede those impacted by the genocide to heal from the trauma. The continued use of the term "anti-Sikh riot" perpetuates the false notion that the massacre was spontaneous and pitted one community against another.

Instead, the Nanavati Commission, headed by a retired Chief Justice of India's Supreme Court, makes it clear that the killing of Sikhs could not have occurred but for the planning and organization of elected government officials.

In fact, on January 3, 2014, Arun Jaitley, the leader of the opposition party, the BJP, described what happened on the 1st of November 1984 as a date when "the worst ever genocide in the country took place against the Sikh community, for which nobody till date has been held responsible."

Shri M. V. Naidu, MP and former national president of the BJP, stated on Thursday, December 10, 2009, "The Congress is responsible for assaulting democracy in 1975 and also for the anti-Sikh genocide in 1984. What action has been taken on Nanavati Committee report on the anti-Sikh riots of 1984?"

In the spirit of unity and harmony, the Sikh genocide must receive official recognition and the perpetrators of the Sikh genocide must be brought to justice.

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honour those who risked their lives to protect all of us. On November 11, Canadians across the country will pause together and pay tribute to the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country. It's a time to think about the extraordinary courage and dedication of those who have served in our armed forces.

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In my family, we will be thinking about Clifford, Richard and Gordon Kimmel—three sons who displayed extraordinary courage and dedication but lost their lives in the Second World War.

We will also pause to think about Great-Grandma Kimmel, the mother of the three boys, who never got to see her sons return home after the war. Grandma Kimmel was eventually named the Silver Cross Mother in 1961 following the deaths of her three sons. Here is their story.

Rifleman Gordon Leroy Kimmel of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles was killed on June 8, 1944, in the Normandy invasion. He was 28.

Corporal Richard Kenneth Kimmel was with the Regina Rifle Regiment. Richard died on June 18, 1944, while taking part in the Normandy invasion. He was also 28.

Finally, Corporal Clifford Howard Kimmel was with the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment. He was the youngest of the Kimmel boys and passed away on December 15, 1944, at the age of 26.

All three of the Kimmel boys who lost their lives were decorated with various medals. The loss of our three great-uncles during the Second World War devastated the family. Stories about them are told over and over again every Remembrance Day.

This November 11, my family will take a moment to give silent thanks for all of our courageous men and women, past and present, who have fought and died protecting our country.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SERVICES ELGIN COUNTY

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm proud to stand today and recognize and congratulate a remarkable organization in my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. Violence Against Women Services Elgin County embarked on a campaign in 2013 with their capital project plans for a new women's shelter in Elgin county. They were told by the minister at the time that if they raised \$1 million and showed community support, the province would invest the remaining amount needed to build the shelter—about \$1.9 million.

I am very proud to say that they have surpassed the goal. They have reached over \$1.1 million. The money was donated by local businesses, service clubs, organizations, individuals and agencies that came together to support a need in our community. It's truly remarkable to see the generosity and compassion that my community has shown in raising these funds. This will allow more women and children to have a safe place to live, sleep and play.

The women's shelter in Elgin county sees roughly 2,000 women and children in one year. They hold a number of fundraising activities throughout the year to ensure they are able to provide the services and necessities needed to provide a safe and comfortable home for all those who reside there.

I want to personally thank every individual business, organization, service club and agency that contributed in reaching their goal. It makes me proud to represent a community that comes together time and time again to ensure all community members are safe.

My hope is that the new minister will respect the previous minister's commitment and help finish this worthwhile campaign.



## CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

**Mr. Han Dong:** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I had the honour and privilege to attend the official opening of the Gerald Sheff and Shanitha Kachan Emergency Department at CAMH, located in my beautiful riding of Trinity-Spadina.

I want to thank Dr. Catherine Zahn, the president of CAMH, her staff, the volunteers and donors of CAMH for their commitment to improve the way Ontarians receive care when faced with mental health challenges. The work that CAMH does impacts us all as Ontarians.

This summer, the Ontario government pledged to increase our investment to Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. That's a commitment to increase funding by \$220 million over three years. I'm proud of this concrete step that we took as a province to contribute \$4.2 million to this project. This investment is crucial to supporting the work that the talented and dedicated staff of CAMH do.

Demand at this department has grown steadily, with 76% more visits in 2014 than in 2006. There has never been a more crucial time to support the important work of CAMH.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of Premier Wynne's commitment to Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, and I thank Minister Hoskins for this much-needed investment. I look forward to working closely with CAMH in the near future.

## VETERANS

### ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Last Friday, I had the pleasure of attending the poppy campaign launch in my local Walmart in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans. The campaign launch was hosted by Ken Green, the president of the Royal Canadian Legion Orléans branch. I am pleased to announce it was well attended. I also would like to sincerely thank all the community leaders who came to show their support: MP Royal Galipeau and city councillors Rainer Bloess and Stephen Blais.

The poppy is important, as it stands as a symbol of collective reminiscence and helps us honour the fallen. The poppy campaign, however, is not only symbolic; through donations, it helps the Royal Canadian Legion support veterans and their families day to day. This also includes those who are currently serving.

Le jour du Souvenir et la campagne annuelle du coquelicot portent une importance particulière dans la région d'Ottawa-Orléans, ma circonscription, puisque cette circonscription se dote de la concentration la plus élevée de personnel militaire de service actif de l'Ontario.

As Canadians, it is important to honour our past, respect our present, and foster our future. Wearing a poppy on the days leading up to November 11 marks our visual pledge to never forget the Canadians who have

fallen serving their country. I encourage everyone to support our veterans, make a donation and wear their poppies proudly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption. I give it to page Ben.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / *Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'œuvre.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 28, 2014, the bill is ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### RESPECTING PRIVATE PROPERTY ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE RESPECT DE LA PROPRIÉTÉ PRIVÉE

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to amend the Trespass to Property Act / *Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'entrée sans autorisation.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Currently, the Trespass to Property Act has no minimum fine for those who trespass, and has a maximum limit of \$1,000 on compensation for damages. Many of the complaints from my community result from people trespassing on farmland and private property, and in the process damaging the property, including crops, livestock and fencing. Unfortunately, it is left to the property owner to repair those damages, and the costs can quickly add up into the thousands of dollars.

I believe my bill will make needed changes to the Trespass to Property Act and allow property owners to be fairly compensated for destruction of their property.

## 658055 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2014

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr12, An Act to revive 658055 Ontario Inc.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

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## 469118 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2014

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr11, An Act to revive 469118 Ontario Limited.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Our government is committed to investing in its people, strengthening our neighbourhoods, and building safer, stronger communities right across Ontario. So it is a pleasure to rise in this House today to acknowledge Crime Prevention Week in Ontario, which this year runs from November 2 to 8.

For over 40 years, police services, community organizations and the people of Ontario have celebrated this week as a time to acknowledge and thank all of those who work, often away from the spotlight, to make their communities a better place. Ontario now has the lowest crime rate in Canada, and I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those unsung heroes right across this province who have helped make this happen: our police officers, firefighters, paramedics, correctional officers, probation and parole officers, peace officers and many, many community groups.

This week also serves as a reminder that we must continue our efforts to strengthen those partnerships, invest in our people, and create opportunities to prevent crime and promote safe, healthy communities. We all know that preventing crime is more effective than focusing on enforcement and punishment. A dollar invested now in crime prevention and early intervention avoids \$7 spent on prosecution, incarceration and other associated costs in the future.

It is on the ground, at the community level, where we can make the biggest difference. That is why this year, our government's Safer and Vital Communities Grant is providing \$1.7 million to support 24 community-run

crime prevention initiatives that enhance mental health services in our communities. In fact, this year marks the 10th anniversary of the program, which has helped over 340 programs with over \$9 million in funding since 2004 across our province.

I recently had the opportunity to visit one such organization in my hometown of Ottawa, in my community of Ottawa Centre. The Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization is a great organization whose Youth on Track program is providing counselling and mentorship to immigrant and refugee youth ages 12 to 19 who are at a higher risk of becoming involved in criminal activity. These are the types of programs we must continue supporting, investing in and championing, because the only way to truly fight crime is to eliminate it from happening in the first place.

Our government is also moving forward on a made-in-Ontario approach to community safety and well-being that builds on Crime Prevention in Ontario: A Framework for Action, and thanks to the work of all our partners, we are well along on this priority. We have engaged with communities all across the province and have learned that, to be effective, strategies that aim to prevent crime and enhance community safety require that everyone work together and use all available community resources to achieve the same objective. We have also learned that in many communities, diverse sectors are already collaborating to develop innovative and effective local responses to local challenges.

Now, in partnership with other ministries, local police services and their community partners, we have developed a preliminary framework on community safety and well-being that will be tested in eight pilot communities over the next six months.

The government has also invested over \$100 million in funding for other grant programs related to crime prevention, including the Toronto and provincial anti-violence intervention strategies and the Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere, or RIDE, program.

Ontario businesses, schools, community groups, police and probation and parole officers need to continue to work together to protect our neighbourhoods, prevent at-risk Ontarians from becoming first-time offenders, and stop first-time offenders from becoming repeat offenders.

This week, Speaker, I encourage all members to take part in Crime Prevention Week activities in their communities and continue to do their part to enhance community safety and well-being.

### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Every year, winter weather arrives before we know it and sometimes before we're ready to even think about it. While often we are busy being inspired by what some might call the beauty of that very first snowfall that Mother Nature has delivered, I think it's also important—very important, in fact—to remember that driving during the winter takes different skills and requires our complete focus. That is why I



want to share with this Legislature what our government is doing right across the province to help keep our roads safe so that people can get where they need to be.

In many places of our province, winter weather has already arrived. That means that our contractors have started winter operations across northern Ontario and are ready to go in southern Ontario. Not that many days ago, Speaker, I was very happy to spend some time in the community of Northumberland-Quinte West with my good friend the member from that particular area, making an important announcement—which I'll allude to in just a quick second—while one of my parliamentary assistants, the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, was in Woodstock simultaneously making a similar announcement.

Our winter maintenance standards are amongst the highest in North America. But we are always looking to improve our program. While I'm sure that we would all like to forget the cold and bluster of last winter, it's important for us to remember that winter's challenges give us the opportunity to reflect on the improvements that our government has made with respect to winter maintenance and with respect also to promoting safe winter driving. We added 50 combination trucks and five tow plows to clear passing and truck-climbing lanes more frequently across the province. And, Speaker, 42 of those vehicles went to northern communities. We introduced our Twitter account, @511ontario, to quickly inform people of road and weather conditions and highway closures.

We've also produced several educational videos to remind drivers of the importance of safe winter driving. This winter, as I mentioned a second ago, at the announcement I made recently, the province is once again working with our contractors to deploy 50 additional pieces of winter maintenance equipment in southern Ontario to help clear most freeway ramps and shoulders more quickly.

We are also adding 20 inspectors to provide on-the-ground oversight during winter storms. Our maintenance contractors use state-of-the-art technology to keep our roads safe for winter driving to make sure that snow and ice are removed quickly and efficiently and to use salt in an environmentally responsible way.

Global-positioning and remote-data-collection tools are installed on all road-clearing equipment to provide detailed information to help better manage winter maintenance operations.

To help people understand what it takes to keep our roads clear and safe during the winter, Ministry of Transportation staff, along with our contractors, are currently hosting open houses at several patrol yards and ONroute service centres across the province. These give the media and residents the chance to get up close and personal with a plow and find out more about how to respond when they see one on the road.

Our contractors, Speaker, work very hard to keep Ontario's 16,900 kilometres of highway maintained during the winter. More than 1,000 snowplows and salt/sand spreaders are used to fight winter storms on provincial

highways. These are operated by hard-working Ontarians who care deeply about the work they do. Their families are travelling the same roads as everyone else. Their goal is simple: to see everyone arrive at their destination safely.

Plowing and spreading sand or salt are only part of keeping our roads safe during winter weather. As always, the Ministry of Transportation continues to work together with the Ontario Provincial Police, the Ontario Road Builders' Association and each of our maintenance contractors to keep Ontario's highways safe for travellers. This important partnership includes expanded community outreach and communications activities about winter maintenance and safe driving throughout the province.

Drivers also play an important role by preparing for winter weather, planning travel carefully, and driving safely.

1530

Sometimes keeping travellers safe means closing the highway, the safest and best course of action until the weather and highway conditions improve. I know that this is frustrating for drivers, because of course they want to get where they're going. The police close roads when they know it's not safe: when blinding snow prevents drivers from seeing clearly in front of them or when snow accumulates so quickly that it's impossible to keep up. This is not a decision that they make lightly, but it is one that they make to keep everyone safe.

Not only are we spreading salt and sand, we're also spreading the word with the help of our road safety partners. Drivers need to adjust their driving to changing weather and highway conditions. They need to check the weather and travel conditions before they head out, and not take the chance if the weather is bad.

Everyone believes that their trip is important; I understand that. They want to visit loved ones. They want to get to work or to an important appointment, or to do day-to-day activities that we all want to do. But the Ministry of Transportation has a very simple, and yet important, goal: to help Ontarians get to their destinations safely.

Soon all members of this Legislature will receive an information package from me with information regarding safe driving, winter maintenance and road safety. I encourage all members to make this information available through their respective constituency offices and to contact me or my staff if they have any questions or concerns.

#### ONTARIO'S AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Our government believes that sport and recreation can help build character and increase self-esteem and well-being for our children and youth in Ontario. That's why in 2009 we introduced the after-school program as a way to engage children and youth in priority neighbourhoods in making healthy life choices through positive activities, and it has been a huge success. I was very pleased that Minister Coteau, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, announced just

last week that we're investing \$13.5 million for Ontario's After-School Program in 2014-15.

In 2014-15, more than 21,000 children and youth at over 400 locations across the province will benefit from the after-school program. We are funding over 130 organizations that provide after-school programming at a variety of sites run by non-profit organizations. That includes schools, community centres, First Nations communities and more.

Since we began the program, children and youth from across our province have had a place to gather after school. They've had a safe place to be together, to do some homework, learn about good food, take part in physical activities and, more importantly, have some healthy fun.

The after-school program incorporates a variety of physical activities that use a game-based approach to teaching fundamental movement skills through games like dodgeball, soccer-baseball, jumping frogs, roller-tag, handball and much more. It includes fun activities to learn about food, nutrition and wellness, and also provides puzzles and board games to stimulate the mind.

The after-school program is also helping us to create a lot of excitement about the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games through Kids 'N Play. This is a resource available on the PPA Kids website which enables kids to learn about the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games through a number of activities, including "Who is Pachi?" I hope everyone knows who Pachi is; he's our great mascot for the games. I had a hug from him the other day out at a community event. It also includes identifying flags of participating countries, a create-your-own-Pan-Am-flag activity, as well as arts and crafts activities such as designing carnival masks, Speaker. Maybe we can do one for the Speaker.

The after-school program has empowered many young people to make healthy and positive changes in their lives. The children we reach today are tomorrow's champions, our future innovators and our next generation of greats.

I want to thank all of those who support the after-school program and those who have come together to make this program so successful for our youth. Together, we'll ensure that Ontarians across the province have a future that is filled with positivity, possibility and promise.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It's now time for responses.

#### CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to respond to the minister's statement on Crime Prevention Week. As the PC critic for community safety and correctional services, I do look forward to building on a strong relationship between our caucus and the front-line officers who keep this province safe.

I'd also like to begin by acknowledging leaders in the Ontario policing community, including OPP Commis-

sioner Vince Hawkes; Ontario Provincial Police Association President Jim Christie; Police Association of Ontario Acting President Dan Axford, and their CAO, Ms. Terri Hilborn; and Chief Jennifer Evans, president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

In my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, I'm grateful for the work of Chief Dennis Poole and his entire staff of officers, as well as that of OPP detachment commander Brad Coulbeck and his counterpart in Essex county, Glenn Miller.

Most people think of police as people whom we can call on to respond to crime, but the reality is that they devote much of their time to crime prevention. They educate citizens on how they can protect themselves against becoming a victim of crime and forge relationships with their communities to promote public trust.

Looking in my own riding at the Chatham-Kent Police Service, they recognize that we cannot arrest our way to safe communities. They will soon be hosting a community safety plan forum to bring local leaders to the table to proactively address issues before they emerge.

I personally believe that crime prevention must be a total community effort. For example, locking your doors, participating in Neighbourhood Watch, educating your children to never accept a ride from a stranger, reporting suspicious behaviour, block parenting, and even a simple thing like removing change from your cup holder in your car are just a few of the actions you can take to prevent crime.

Speaker, working together, we can make Ontario's communities safe and resilient.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I too would like to thank those for my ministerial statement response on winter maintenance. There are a few things that will never change in Ontario: (1) cold winters, (2) snowfall, (3) government's responsibility to remove snow from roadways, and, of course, (4) the Wynne government's overspending and debt problems. The last one is a guarantee. In fact, they're all guaranteed to happen in our corner of the Great White North. It's for this reason that many wonder how this government could have so royally botched the winter maintenance of our highways last year.

Yes, it was a harsh winter, but we do have cold winters here in Canada. Yes, a lot of snow came down. Again, it's Canada; snow will fall. So why was the government unable to do its job? We've heard the government's refrain that contractors are to blame, but this is government's responsibility. If the job is not getting done, it's up to government to fix it, not just point and fine others.

There was a \$15-million increase for winter maintenance last year. While we know that \$8 million went towards new equipment, there are questions about the remaining \$7 million. Where was that spent—on more bureaucrats with stopwatches? I question how that spending will improve winter maintenance this year.



In fact, despite the announcements and the statements we have no new spending for winter maintenance in northern Ontario this year, where winter maintenance means the most. Speaker, I remain concerned that the only things as unchanging as the winter and snowfall in Ontario this year will be the government's poor winter maintenance record, and of course, we can't forget the spending and debt problem.

#### ONTARIO'S AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** To comment on Ontario after-school programs, which are an important asset to the communities across Ontario: They reach children and youth in priority neighbourhoods, offering 21,000 children and youth the opportunity to participate in sport and recreation activities.

Programs that are delivered in my riding are delivered by non-profit organizations like the Kawartha Lakes boys and girls clubs, located in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. They have been serving the needs of children and youth in recreation since the 1960s. They have many satellite areas in the city of Kawartha Lakes, like in Lindsay, Kirkfield, Coboconk, Dunsford and Little Britain. These after-school programs themselves provide 250 children per day with an opportunity to access physical activity, healthy eating and nutrition, health and wellness, and community-focused programs that benefit them on a daily basis.

I thank the minister for her statement and the programs that are provided. Those are an example of the ones locally in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

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#### CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I'm pleased to respond to the minister on Crime Prevention Week. I want to begin by thanking all of our first responders, professionals and volunteers who work proactively to prevent crime. Undoubtedly, this includes police officers, but must be broadened to include paramedics, firefighters, correctional officers and any other occupation that oversees law enforcement, first response or education.

I would like to remind my colleagues that more work could be done to lower the rate of repeat offences and focus on the rehabilitation of offenders as a form of crime prevention.

Specifically, Ontario communities are grappling with an epidemic of illicit drug abuse, most recently with the explosion of heroine usage across the province. In many areas, this is unprecedented. It destroys the fabric of the community, divides families and limits the potential of our youth. All too often, these offenders end up in correctional facilities, where they are punished rather than rehabilitated.

New Democrats believe in crime prevention models that emphasize treatment rather than incarceration of non-violent drug offenders. Drug treatment courts em-

body this vision by providing access to counselling, drug screening and secure housing as a form of sentencing. We are encouraged by the community partners that come together to make these alternative sentencing courts possible. Unfortunately, there are only a handful of these specialized bodies in the province, and all suffer from limited resources to achieve such an important mandate. These courts are often put together using existing services and with little or no dedicated provincial funding to pay for the many operating costs of the program.

We believe more can be done to facilitate programs that work to end the revolving door of drug abuse as a way to promote crime prevention in our communities.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** Speaker, through you, I thank the minister for his comments on winter maintenance—very important to my riding in northern Ontario, as well as across Ontario.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that CBC Radio on September 29 posted an article online on Morning North—and it was audio as well—that there were fines that were given to contractors for not fulfilling duties under their contracts. In northeastern Ontario, there are four contractors with total fines of \$656,750. So there were fines given out.

What really bothers me, as critic and as a representative of northern Ontario and for those across Ontario who drive the highways in the wintertime, is the fact that they were fined for health and safety issues: for example, not deploying equipment within 30 minutes of the start of a snowfall, not deploying equipment after two centimetres of snow or slush were accumulated. Those are major issues, especially in northern Ontario, and I'm sure in other rural areas where we're not only dealing with the snow and slush on the roads and slippery hazards; we're dealing with narrow roadways, roadways with no shoulders, and other hazards like huge slurry trucks, lumber trucks etc.

The minister did state, however, that measures are going forward. I think 110 pieces of equipment have been purchased between last year's season and this year's season—as well as 20 new inspectors, a director position and a lot of education.

As a gentleman who believes the glass is half full, I am looking forward to improvement from last year. As an advocate for my area, northern Ontario and the province, I look forward to improvements in winter maintenance this coming year.

#### ONTARIO'S AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'm cautiously pleased at the minister's initiative to get our kids active after school. To focus on healthy eating, to help gain confidence and hopefully to result in better success at school, sounds very good.

But then, there's the part about new after-school funding. His announcement suggests that over 400 priority

neighbourhoods across our province will offer programs. It seems to me that the centre point for these will be schools. That's where the kids are and where the programs will begin. So, if funding is going to service providers to deliver these programs, who's paying the additional costs of extra operating time at schools? If that cost is coming out of the new funding, I don't think there'll be much left for the programming.

There are lots of examples of community groups, like daycare providers, library branches, parks and recreation, and even sports teams like the Raptors, forming partnerships for programs similar to this. It would even work well to have a chef and cooking schools partner to provide healthy snacks for these programs.

But I am concerned, when this government decides to implement something new, that they almost immediately fob off to their Liberal-friendly consultants the task of getting the programs organized. Then the money goes down the consultant drain and Ontarians end up with no program or other quantifiable outcomes.

The list of activities like sports, arts, crafts, health and wellness is terrific for young people to develop. But they also need to learn basic street smarts, so a program that would allow age-appropriate independent movement, like from school to the library or recreation centre, should also be included.

And again, no funding for consultants; it needs to go to the non-profits, the community and recreation centres, libraries, schools and the staff who are already aware of what their communities need and how to deliver it.

## PETITIONS

### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I do, before I get into my petition, want to recognize Carmina Falkiner and Natasha Mitchell. They were not here earlier when I introduced them, and I want to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly. I have a petition that they have been working so diligently on, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Fix FRO now!!

"Whereas there have been ongoing issues with the Family Responsibility Office (FRO); and

"Whereas these concerns are an issue for many people involved with the program and their needs must be addressed immediately; and

"Whereas many of FRO's customer service representatives are condescending and have belittled recipients with unacceptable suggestions to withdraw from the program if they don't like how it's run; and

"Whereas some employers are slow to forward payments to FRO on behalf of the payor despite court orders directing for monthly payments; and

"Whereas companies who have a history of repeating these actions need to be held accountable. Stricter enforcement needs to be put in place; and

"Whereas payors going on social assistance do not receive any type of penalty for FRO arrears owing; and

"Whereas there are accounts that are years in arrears for no valid reason (a skip tracing program needs to be put into place); and

"Whereas the payor is in arrears after one month of missed or delayed payment according to the courts, while the legislation says the payor must be three months in arrears before any action is taken;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Fix FRO now and set up a review committee to identify inherent and fundamental program problems for immediate remedial action!"

Speaker, I will sign this petition and send it down to the desk with Jamie, and again thank the ladies from the region of Waterloo for their hard work on such an important issue.

### HOME CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from my constituents from Capreol, Hanmer and Val Caron, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas home care services offer quality-of-life benefits to Ontarians and allow individuals to receive care in the comfort of their own homes; and

"Whereas the Liberal government established a five day 'target' for home care services; and

"Whereas as of 2014 the Liberal government's home care target is only met consistently by half of Ontario's local health integration networks; and

"Whereas some community care access centres report that up to 10% of community-referred patients wait 33 days or more for home care services; and

"Whereas the Auditor General has raised concerns about home care funding and access inequities across Ontario;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to "ensure that all Ontarians requiring home care are able to receive services within five days."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Adam to bring it to the Clerk.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I have a petition to present today to the Legislature, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Enbridge's proposed re-engineering of its line 9 poses new risks for the people of Ontario, requiring a more comprehensive review than the federal National Energy Board review process has provided. Ontario residents need to know the risks of allowing the line 9 re-engineering project to proceed, including the threat to property values, personal health, and safety;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to initiate a full and democratic environmental assessment of the project before it is too late."



I agree with this petition, and I affix my signature to it.

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here from the Alzheimer Society.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

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"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the time to present this petition. I'll send it with Alex to the table.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** This petition is on behalf of constituents in Algoma-Manitoulin from the Sault North area, from Goulais River all the way to Batchawana Bay. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, are being charged astronomical costs referred to as 'delivery fees';

"Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, would like the 'delivery fees' looked into and regulated so as to protect the consumer from big businesses gouging the consumer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop Algoma Power's influx of fees for delivery and stop the onset of increasing these fees another 40% within four years."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Gregory to bring down to the Clerk.

### LEGAL AID

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It was sent to me by a number of clients from Mississauga legal aid. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the" Ontario "budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I agree with this petition and I'm pleased to sign it and send it down with page Faith.

### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I present a petition from Bluewater, and it reads as follows:

"In light of the many wide-ranging concerns being raised by citizens and 60 action groups across Ontario and the irrefutable international evidence of a flawed technology, health concerns, environmental effects and unprecedented costs;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the government of Ontario declare an Ontario-wide moratorium on the further development of wind farms."

I totally agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with Jamie.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas global climate change is the most serious threat facing humanity and poses significant risks to our environment, economy, society and human health; and

"More than 97% of scientists working in the disciplines contributing to studies of our climate and all national science academies accept that climate change is

almost certainly being caused by human activities, mainly due to the use of fossil fuels; and

"The objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ... is 'stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system'; and

"Climate scientists are now warning us that limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 Celsius is essential; and

"Ontario has a clear responsibility to reduce our emissions given that our per capita greenhouse gas emissions are among the highest in the world...; and

"The best research today indicates that energy demands are decreasing and that sufficient potential energy from a diverse supply of renewable sources exists to meet Ontario's current and projected energy demands;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately prepare a plan that requires that 100% of Ontario's stationary energy be from zero-carbon sources before the end of 2023, with a timeline to be audited annually by the Auditor General and published reports."

I'm going to sign this and give it to Jagmeet to be delivered to the table.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I've got a petition from residents of Scarborough Southwest. It's addressed as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Enbridge's proposed re-engineering of its line 9 poses new risks for the people of Ontario, requiring a more comprehensive review than the federal National Energy Board review process has provided. Ontario residents need to know the risks of allowing the line 9 re-engineering project to proceed, including the threat to property values, personal health, and safety;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to initiate a full and democratic environmental assessment of the project before it is too late."

I agree with this petition, and I sign my signature to it.

#### COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

**Mr. Todd Smith:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Coast Guard Auxiliary units are oftentimes the first responders to any emergency situation that occurs on our waterways;

"Whereas the use of green flashing lights by Coast Guard volunteers in their vehicles would help to cut down on their response time by alerting others on the roadways to their presence;

"Whereas these flashing green lights are currently prohibited from use in Coast Guard volunteers' vehicles under regulations in the Highway Traffic Act that restrict

the use of flashing green lights to only the vehicles of volunteer firefighters and ministry-prescribed medical responders;

"Whereas the flashing green lights cost nothing to the government as they are bought and paid for by the volunteers themselves;

"Whereas, if the Coast Guard Auxiliary units were allowed the use of these flashing green lights in their vehicles, it would cut down the transportation time on the roadways, and this cut in time could very well mean the difference between life and death;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Coast Guard Auxiliary units either become prescribed medical responders, or a change to the act that adds ministry-prescribed volunteer first responders access to the use of the flashing green emergency light."

I'll send this to the table with Alex.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 2013, 16 construction workers in Ontario were killed in tragic falls, almost 3,400 WSIB fall claims were accepted, and many other falls were never reported;

"Whereas in addition to the human tragedy of workplace falls, the financial cost of each year's WSIB fall claims is about \$100 million;

"Whereas the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador implemented new fall protection training regulations on January 1, 2012, after which fall claims declined by 25%;

"Whereas a similar training requirement and result in Ontario could prevent over 800 fall tragedies each year and avoid \$25 million in costs with the WSIB; and

"Whereas in 2010, the Ontario government promised to implement a similar training requirement by December 2011, but still has not done so; and has thereby left workers at risk;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Labour to make saving workers' lives a priority and stop delaying fall protection training regulations."

I sign this petition and hand it to page Ben to deliver to the table.

#### LEGAL AID

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I recognize for further petitions the member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Speaker. I will get a stool next time, Speaker—guaranteed.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and



"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

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"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I will sign this petition and send it to the table with Faith.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The time for petitions has expired.

## OPPOSITION DAY

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

### PRIVATISATION DES BIENS PUBLICS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I move the following motion:

Whereas the selling off of Highway 407 costs the people of Ontario \$1 billion a year; and

Whereas \$1.7 billion annually from the LCBO goes directly into paying for the services that families rely on; and

Whereas the OLG put \$1.9 billion annually into the provincial treasury; and

Whereas the Harris government privatization of hydro drove up bills for families and businesses; and

Whereas public assets benefit all Ontarians;

Therefore, in the opinion of this House, any deal, arrangement, transaction, government bill or other action of the government that seeks to privatize the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, the hydro sector or the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. would be subject to a province-wide referendum.

This is addressed to the Premier.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 2.

Ms. Horwath.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I really appreciate the opportunity to raise with Ontarians and with the members of this Legislature a very important issue that has been in the news media quite a bit recently, and it has to do with the shared public assets that are owned by the people of this province.

Some people may know the history of, particularly, the electricity system in our province. In fact, it was a Conservative member, back at the turn of the last century, back around 1906—this member hailed from, I believe, the London area. His name was Sir Adam Beck. What Sir Adam Beck decided to do, way back then, was to establish the Ontario electricity system. He actually had a slogan or a motto for Ontario Hydro back 100 years ago, and in Latin it was, "Dona naturae pro populo sunt."

Do you know what that means, Speaker? How's your Latin? Have you been brushing up on your Latin lately? I'll tell you exactly what it means; I'm sure you're waiting with bated breath.

That motto, translated from its original Latin, from the founder of Ontario Hydro over a century ago, Sir Adam Beck, who was a Conservative member of this Legislature at the time, means, "The gifts of nature are for the people." Wow. That was a Conservative's idea. The gifts of nature are for the people. From the very beginning, our electricity system was meant to serve Ontarians and to be owned by Ontarians so that Ontarians could reap the benefit of that electricity system.

I want to remind this House that, as Adam Beck was a Conservative cabinet minister in Premier James Whitney's government, Conservatives should, in fact, still be supportive of this kind of idea. I look forward to the support of the Conservative caucus today, over 100 years later, in memory of that great minister, to support this motion this afternoon.

Beck fiercely defended the merits of public power against a Liberal Party of the day that opposed it. So it's quite interesting where we are now. That was back in 1905, when that debate was happening, when the Conservatives were fiercely supporting and defending the idea of a public electricity system and the Liberals were saying, "No, that's not the right way to go." They were against a public electricity system.

That was 1905, and this is 2014. Nowadays, the same old parties happen to be on the same page. My Conservative colleagues, in fact, are willing to turn their back on the wisdom of Adam Beck, I fear. We will see this afternoon. Perhaps I'm wrong, but I suspect that my colleagues here in this chamber from the Conservative Party will turn their backs on the wisdom of that colleague of theirs from so long ago, and my Liberal colleagues across the way are determined to go back to their roots and actually oppose public ownership of our electricity system. Both want to put public power into private hands. New Democrats are consistent on this: We think that's the wrong idea, we think that has been proven time and time again to be the wrong idea, and that's why this is part of our motion today.

We believe that our electricity system doesn't belong to the Liberals and it doesn't belong to the Conservatives or, in fact, to any political party. The fact of the matter is that the electricity system, Ontario Hydro—Hydro One, as we now call it—the LCBO, the OLG, all of these public assets, all of these public entities belong to the people of Ontario. So it goes without saying, or at least the logical conclusion, then, is: If these things are not owned by the Liberal Party and they're not owned by the Conservative Party but they are, in fact, owned by the people of Ontario, then it's not up to the Liberal Party to sell them off or to the Conservative Party to sell them off. In fact, that decision is a decision that should be left to the people of Ontario to make. Not wholesale, not bit by bit: None of these things should be in any way removed from the people's purview, from their ownership.

Nos institutions publiques n'appartiennent qu'aux Ontariennes et Ontariens. They belong to every Ontarian, not just the well-connected few, not just those who are licking their chops and rubbing their palms, waiting for these things to go onto the auction block.

Today our motion, which I just read out, the motion before the House, calls for a specific thing to happen before any government can sell off any one of these assets that are shared public assets. Before any deal can be made, before any arrangement, any scheme can be cooked up, before any transaction can transpire, before any government bill or any action whatsoever from any government can actually take place that seeks to privatize the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, or the electricity sector or parts thereof, or the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.—before any of that can take place, there needs to be a step that's built in, and that step is to go back to the people who actually own these assets, and that's the people of Ontario. That's what we are calling for in this motion. We are calling for the government of Ontario, whether it be Liberal or Conservative, to respect the people of Ontario, because it's the people of Ontario who own these assets. So instead of just simply allowing a government to go ahead with one of these schemes after they've cooked it up behind closed doors and they lay it on the table in this Legislature or, worse, on the table of a cabinet discussion, they have to go back to the people and, through a referendum, get the permission of the owners of those assets before any scheme can be implemented.

If we had this tool in place more than a decade ago, the billion dollars each and every year that is generated by the 407 would be benefiting the citizens, the people of Ontario, instead of some private consortium. What a shame when we look at the deficit that we have in this province. What a shame to think of the revenue that we could be getting here in this treasury from that 407. In fact, we could actually have a highway in place that's already paid for itself and no longer have people pay tolls on that highway. That was the initial plan for that highway. Unfortunately, once the Conservatives got hold of it, that plan went—well, it went somewhere where the sun doesn't shine.

Anyway, the bottom line is that we know very well that those deals do not work for the people of Ontario. Before Kathleen Wynne now can arrange a fire sale of the crown jewels of our public corporations, Ontarians do deserve to have their say. If the Premier wants to go down that same road of privatization, then she should put that decision to a vote.

**1610**

Hydro One and OPG provide critical utilities that need to stay in public hands. The LCBO and the OLG have a proven track record, Speaker, of protecting young people in particular by helping to enforce our laws around gaming and around alcohol use, and, of course, they're proven revenue generators for our province. These crown corporations give billions of dollars back to the public purse: \$1.7 billion from LCBO alone, and a further \$1.9

billion from the OLG. We depend on this revenue, Speaker. The people depend on this revenue, because it helps to fund our schools. It helps to fund our hospitals. It helps to make sure that people get the front-line care that they need. It helps to pay for our roads, bridges and other kinds of infrastructure, and all kinds of services that families rely on across this province.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that New Democrats have had to fight privatization, and, unfortunately, it won't be the last, in my opinion. During the time of unrest in Ontario back in the mid- to late 1990s, there were these events that occurred in a number of communities across Ontario. They were called the “days of action.” They happened in my community in Hamilton back in February 1996.

During those days of action, there were literally over 100,000 people who took to the streets in my city of Hamilton, fellow citizens of the Hamilton area and of the surrounding area all the way to Toronto and London and other places as well. Those folks came out onto the streets for a specific reason. They came out onto the streets to protest the damage that Mike Harris was doing to Ontario through cuts and through privatization. I had really hoped back then that those days were over. I hoped that those lessons had been learned. But it seems that this Liberal government is determined to make the same mistakes as that Conservative Harris government made back in the 1990s.

This fight, Speaker, is not about ideology. But what it is about is protecting the dollars and cents of the people of Ontario. That's what this fight is all about. Privatization costs us all a lot more in the long run. I don't know why the Liberals refuse to learn that lesson. It costs seniors who are living on a fixed income, it costs families who are struggling to make ends meet, and it costs young people who are trying to get their start in the world.

Ontarians would not stand for it—they would not stand for it—when Mike Harris and Ernie Eves schemed to privatize our electricity system, driving up our electricity bills in the process. That plan made no sense under the Conservatives. People suffered an immediate increase in their electricity bills of 25%, and then, of course, we've all seen where the electricity bills have continued to go as consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments continued to privatize more and more and more the generation of electricity in this province.

So that plan made no sense when it was started by the Conservatives and as it continued under the Liberals. It makes no sense today for Kathleen Wynne's Liberals to do the exact same thing, having not learned a thing from the mistakes of the past. I say shame on the Liberals for not learning those lessons, because the people of this province simply can't afford Liberal mistakes any longer.

Back in 1998, the Conservatives brought in the 407 act, and that act actually contained provisions for the sell-off of Highway 407. They amended the Electricity Act in a bid to sell off Hydro One; back then it was Ontario Hydro. It set a dangerous legislative precedent that the Liberals will have no trouble following.



All it takes is one vote in this House and our crown corporations could be put on the auction block.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I think the member from St. Catharines is actually supportive of the Liberals' actions around privatization of hydro. I think the people of St. Catharines actually would be very, very worried when they see their member up here laughing about it and joking about it, mocking this very serious debate about the privatization of our public assets. Shame on him, Speaker, for ignoring—shame on him. He's actually very close to Niagara Falls, Speaker. Shame on him for ignoring the needs of the people of his constituency. It is quite, quite sad.

All it would take is a vote in this House and our crown corporations could be put on the auction block—just like that, in the blink of an eye. No one party should be able to make such a decision, not without sign-off from Ontarians. Ontarians want more accountability. Isn't it this party right here, the party of the member from St. Catharines, the party of Kathleen Wynne, that talks a good, good game around accountability, that likes to talk all the time about being accountable to the people? One of the best ways to be accountable to the people is to give them the respect of making their own decision about whether or not a publicly owned asset is going to be put on the auction block here in Ontario. That's the best way to do it.

But they're not seeing that kind of accountability from this government. In so many ways they're not seeing it. They're not seeing it in so many ways, but particularly when it comes to these behind-the-doors backroom deals that are being schemed up by the Liberals. Instead, they're seeing other things as well. They're seeing oversight being surrendered to the private sector in the name of shifting risk and getting value for money. But time and time again, the results have been the exact opposite of what Liberals and Conservatives claim when they put these fancy words to these schemes. What they do is they leave Ontarians footing the bill, and that is not good enough. The people of this province deserve much, much better.

The Liberal government has wasted hundreds of millions of dollars on private IT contractors to do the work that trained Ontario public service workers can and should be doing. It made a mess of northern roads by privatizing winter maintenance—I know there were ministerial statements about that just this afternoon.

It put private interests ahead of people's interests with the bungled sell-off of the ONTC, particularly Ontera. My northern colleagues can correct me, but when they went to put Ontera onto the auction block, the asset was valued at how much?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It was \$30 million.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The asset was valued at \$30 million. This is the communication arm of Ontario Northland, am I right? It's the communications part, the IT part of the communications part of Ontario Northland. We know that the passenger train got shut down, we know

that they don't care over there about the transportation needs of northerners, but they also sold off an asset that had a value of \$30 million. And how much did the Liberals get for it? It was eight million bucks. Eight million bucks?

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Six million bucks. Worse: six million bucks. So they flushed 24 million bucks down the toilet in the interests of a private company—and I think it was Bell, if I'm not mistaken—not in the interests of northerners; not in the interests of Ontarians. That's what this Liberal government is all about; that's what they do: They put the interests of private entities ahead of the interests of Ontarians.

This government also squandered billions and billions.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's interesting. The member for Sault St. Marie seems to be quite agitated about this issue about Ontario Northland. Maybe as a northerner, he's getting a little bit of feedback from some of his constituents about how wrong-headed it was to sell off the ONTC and to shut down the passenger train in northern Ontario.

But that's not the end of the squandering of the Liberals, unfortunately; that is not the end of it. They squandered billions on eHealth and Ornge air ambulance, and the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants scandal. These are the kinds of things that this Liberal government is doing over and over and over again—not in the best interest of Ontarians; not at all.

It allowed huge private P3s or AFPs, whatever you want to call them, these nice little deals, these nice little schemes that the Liberals put together to drive up the costs in infrastructure projects over and over again in this province to the point at which the Auditor General has raised flags about the waste of money by these Liberals when it comes to the model they have for financing our infrastructure projects.

They changed the rules. This government, the Liberals, changed the rules so that MaRS could get a government loan, and then they bailed out a US real estate firm without even proving that there was a business case in doing so.

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This government loves to talk about how privatization saves money, but we've already seen how privatization costs will spiral out of control. We've seen it happen time and time again. The public needs to know that our shared resources are being invested in properly.

Nobody, in all of my travels around this province, Speaker, has ever said to me that they want to pay twice as much for electricity—certainly not seniors living in rural Ontario and across the north who depend on electricity for heat. But that's what will happen if the Liberals have their way and they're allowed to go ahead with their wrong-headed plans.

Privatizing Hydro One distribution assets and local utilities will create inefficiencies, will lower revenues for the province and will drive up costs for consumers, as did

the privatization of power generation under the Harris government.

When Ontarians own an institution, we can—and we will—make sure that that institution is accountable, that it works for the citizens of this province, not for financial speculators, not for private interests.

While the Premier's advisers are busy meeting behind closed doors with private buyers, who will put Ontarians first, I ask, Speaker? Certainly not the Conservatives. They've abandoned Adam Beck's commitment to public power. That leaves the job to New Democrats. We will protect our shared assets, because Ontarians built those shared assets together. This legacy belongs to our children and our grandchildren, not to political parties and private interests, and certainly not to a Liberal Party that has shown itself to be so incapable of putting the interests of the people of this province first over the interests of their well-connected friends.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I'm happy to talk about our responsible plan to unlock the value of assets in order to invest in roads, bridges and public transit in Ontario; and the opportunity to address the leader of the third party, who is being irresponsible when she says the government should never review assets and that we should never look at maximizing the benefit for the people of Ontario.

First, let me address the NDP's proposal to hold an expensive referendum less than six months after the last province-wide vote, and our responsible commitment to unlock the value of the assets that was laid out in both the budget and the Liberal plan that we put to Ontarians in the last election.

The people of Ontario gave this Liberal government a four-year mandate to pass a progressive budget and implement it. Let me read you the text from the 2014 Ontario Liberal budget on page 20:

"The government will look at maximizing and unlocking value from assets it currently holds, including real estate holdings as well as crown corporations such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario."

And let me read you the text from the 2014 Ontario Liberal platform, on page 4, which states: "Our Moving Ontario Forward plan includes a balanced and responsible approach for paying for these investments.

"The funds will be from dedicated sources of revenue ... asset optimization: \$3.15 billion or 10.9%."

The leader of the third party knows that we put this to the people of Ontario in the last election, because she adopted our fiscal plan in her own NDP platform. The NDP knows that the people of Ontario voted for the Liberal plan. And the NDP knows that the government now has a mandate to move forward with unlocking the value of assets.

So we have been clear: We are looking to unlock the value from our assets to invest in schools, hospitals, roads and bridges, and create jobs. I know that in my riding of Cambridge, my constituents are elated that the

long-awaited hospital expansion, Cambridge Memorial Hospital, is now moving forward and has created jobs for the next five years.

We've also got the 401 widening project under way right now between Highway 8 and 24, as well as the replacement of the Speedville bridge. We are ecstatic that these projects are finally moving forward.

Less than six months ago, we had an election. Now the third party is asking for an expensive rerun. Do they know how much that will cost? Let me tell them. The last election cost \$90 million to run, and they're asking for that again. This is an irresponsible position from the third party. We had an election in Junewhere the Liberal platform and the budget were clear about moving forward on asset modernization. We've been elected as MPPs with the responsibility to move forward with that mandate. When I meet with constituents, politicians and stakeholders from Cambridge, as well as Waterloo region, their top priority is funding infrastructure and transit projects right here in our region, including the LRT and the Highway 7 expansion.

Even the NDP member from Toronto–Danforth agrees that MPPs have a job to do. Here's what he said just last Friday in a press conference about a different topic: "We elect people to make decisions. They have to make a decision." The quote was from the member across the way, from Peter Tabuns, October 31, 2014. I acknowledge that the topic was not assets, but his point remains the same. We were elected to get to work. That's what we're doing.

I can't help but wonder why the third party had put forward this motion, given that they know all of this already. My only conclusion is that they're desperate to try and find any rationale why they voted against the most progressive budget in Ontario's history. The NDP leader was criticized by her own party for doing so; I get that. But it's wrong, and that's why we will be voting against today's irresponsible motion.

Now, our plan: In April, the Premier appointed the Advisory Council on Government Assets to provide balanced and transparent recommendations as our government takes action to maximize the value of key provincial assets. We've made the responsible choice by appointing this expert team, led by Ed Clark, which includes Janet Ecker and Frances Lankin.

By unlocking the full value of government assets, such as Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation and the LCBO, our government is ensuring that every public dollar is at work for the people of Ontario. We look forward to council's full report once their review is complete. Council will broaden their commitment to a collaborative and transparent process and deepen the relationships that they have with all the parties. Council's findings will inform our decisions to increase revenue and reinvest in priority infrastructures, projects such as the opening of Saint Gabriel Catholic school in Cambridge this past September that the community is very proud of.

Unlocking the value of our assets will happen through careful, thoughtful evaluation, unlike the PCs, who had



given away the 407 in a fire sale. I think the third party can agree with me on that. Think about it: How much revenue could the people of Ontario have had to pay for our valuable public services had the PC government been responsible about the 407 asset?

Despite what the NDP says, we asked the council to retain the government's long-term ownership of these assets' core components. "We recommend keeping all three companies—OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO," said Ed Clark in his speech dated October 17, 2014—not a word in that quote about selling off these companies.

By making smart business decisions that maximize the value of assets, we are ensuring that every public dollar is at work for the people of Ontario. Additional revenues from provincial assets will help us with new infrastructure, roads and transit and a \$29-billion commitment over the next 10 years to pay for this.

Let me say a quick word about energy rates because the NDP have a lot to say that sounds nice on the surface, but scratch below it: They don't really have a plan for Ontario's energy sector. Their tough talk about private power deals is questionable, considering their advocating for selling off, and that they actually had a history of nine private power-generating contracts the last time they were in government.

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The Liberal government is being responsible, and I look forward to moving ahead to make sure that we listen to the council's recommendations about our assets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member from Cambridge.

Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure to speak on this motion today with all of my friends behind me. Oh, my goodness, look at them. The posse is on its way.

Speaker, I have a problem with this opposition day motion. I find the very premise of it somewhat flawed. We're going to cover a lot of things here, in the few moments that I have to speak—or we're going to try, anyway. The NDP start out on the premise that the sale of any public assets is a bad thing. That's their basic tenet. That's their default position.

Do you remember Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister who—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's right. He talked to the spirits, and he talked to his mother. He was a little bit weird, but—

**Interjection:** He got us through World War II.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, he got us through World War II. Maybe I've got this wrong, but wasn't it him who said, "Conscription if necessary, but not necessarily conscription"?

So, the sale of public assets if necessary, but not necessarily the sale of public assets. You've got to kind of pick your spots. There are times when the sale of a public asset is quite simply the right thing to do.

I'll tell you: Nobody can do a worse job running a business than the government.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Like health care?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Health care is not a business, Gilles.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, my God—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You play on your little computer there while I speak.

You wouldn't want to hire the government to run your convenience store. I can tell you that right now.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, there you go. In certain circumstances, it's the right thing to do.

The problem with this Ed Clark expert panel, where you've got your token Tory and your token NDP—

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** And your token Liberal.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** —and your token Liberals. They've got to make sure that they make it appear to be non-partisan. But believe me, they were given their marching orders: "This is the conclusion that we need you to come up with. This is all the fluff you're going to throw out there in your little report, but at the end of the day this is where we're going to be."

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Before this turns into Saturday Night Live—

**Interjections:** Too late.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** —and the fact that both sides have been somewhat respectful, I would ask that they continue to be respectful so that I can enjoy, or at least hear, the speaker from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. Thank you very much.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Hell, they might even learn something. So—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd ask the member to withdraw, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I withdraw.

Heck, they might even learn something.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, I'm not going back there.

Any of you people who know anything about the real estate business—if you get an appraisal done on a piece of property, you will get people to kind of tailor that appraisal to your needs. If you're the buyer, you're going to want that appraisal to be low. If you're the seller, you're going to want that appraisal to be high. So you're going to try to influence the appraiser. I'm not suggesting that they do anything that could not be justified with proper details, formulae etc., but believe me, there is always a little bit of room in an estimate.

That's what you get when you have an expert panel: They kind of read the tea leaves—and they understand where the government is coming from. They understand the thinking over there and they're going to try to make sure that they make their boss, the one who's paying the bill, happy.

Anyway, they wanted to come back with the conclusion, "Listen, we really can't sell those things right now. We're making a little bit of money on some of them"—because what the Liberals want to be able to do is, in next year's budget, say, "We tried our best, folks."

We tried to sell off some of these public assets, but the expert panel advised us not to. By the way, your taxes are going up, the fees are going up, and also we're going to be forced to cut some services here in the province of Ontario, because—did we tell you? We've got a massive deficit that we just can't seem to control and we've got a debt that is greater than the debt of all provinces combined, so we're going to have to make some changes here." Taxes, service cuts: That's what will be coming when they cannot sell some of those public assets.

But then, on the other hand, they've got money to buy other public assets. MaRS: \$309 million to buy that building that nobody is in. When you walk in the door, they give you earplugs. That's because when you say something, you get such an echo that it hurts, so they give you something to protect yourself. There's a sign there, "Beware: This is an empty building"—but then, in the fine print, "—that you're paying for."

They've got money to buy MaRS. I hear that next week, they're putting a bid on Halley's Comet, but they just can't seem to catch up to it. It keeps moving on them. But you know what? If they can tie that sucker down, they're going to get a bid on it. Don't you worry about that.

So you've got MaRS. They've spent all this money. I'm telling you, there's going to be some sweet digs over there for some public servants in a couple of years, or maybe a couple of months. What are we paying, \$465,000 a month in interest on that? My goodness gracious. A beautiful building; we have no need for it.

By the way, those civil servants who you're going to move into MaRS, because you've got nobody else coming to pay the way: Are they coming from somewhere else or are you just going to hire some new ones to fill the building? Liberal math is hard to understand sometimes. Are they just going to hire a bunch of new ones and say, "What's your job? Well, we don't really have a job for you, but you need to occupy MaRS. You're going to be the new inhabitants of MaRS. You're going to be way ahead of the space age. Here we are. We're going to inhabit that building. We're going to hire a whole bunch of people."

Seriously, Speaker, when you're talking about Liberal logic and Liberal management, it does get a little funny sometimes, because you wonder how in the name of Sam Hill, when you folks over there sit in your cabinet meetings—and I know there are lots of cabinet ministers sitting here today—what you are talking about. You must ask yourselves, "How can we go home tonight and not feel that something is wrong when these are the decisions we're making?"

That MaRS—there's a new movie coming out; I saw an advert. I think it's called *Interstellar* or something. They're being sent off from the earth because—in the ad it says, "This will be the last generation to inhabit the earth," and they send this guy: "Go find us a place to live."

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Don't put those guys in charge.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, I'll tell you, they're way ahead of *Interstellar*. They're going to find us places to

live right here on earth. They're going to invest \$309 million to house a few hundred civil servants.

But let's get back to the motion itself. One of the things I have a problem with—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** You have many problems, Yak.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, my friend. I'll be the first to admit that.

The motion today calls for a referendum to sell off the assets. Well, do you realize what it costs to run an election? The same dynamics would exist in a referendum because you would have third parties looking for government funding to run their campaigns against selling the assets, because they'd say, "Well, we're here to protect public property, but we've got no money, so government, you're going to have to give us money so we can challenge your referendum." Then you're going to have people who believe that this is a good business deal, who are going to be out there advertising, promoting and campaigning for the rights to purchase or see that asset sold because they believe it's in the best interests of the public. So where does it stop? Where does it stop? As much as I disagree with this government on that other side many times, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** No.

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**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, from time to time. Yes, I do, I say to the member from Northumberland—Quinte West. You'll not find me voting with you all the time.

But one thing I will say is that a government is elected to govern and show some strength and be willing to test yourselves and make the tough decisions. So I'm not a fan of having a referendum to sell a public asset. Referendums for certain reasons—absolutely. But we can't run a country, a province or any other jurisdiction just on referendums. That's what we elect people for. People don't want a referendum on everything. If it is something that is near and dear to their heart, they might think a referendum is a great idea, but generally speaking, they want the people elected here to govern and make the decisions. They just want you to make the decisions that are actually in their best interests and not always in the best interests of the Liberal Party. That's something you might want to think about.

I'm not going to talk about MaRS a whole lot more today, because there will be other days. But I am going to say that we will not be supporting this motion, because we don't believe that it is in the best interests of Ontario's people as well.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're going to trust the Liberals on this?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm not saying I trust the Liberals. That's not what I said. But sometimes you have to make a choice between two evils, and that's what I'm going to do today. Today I'm going to choose the lesser of the two evils, and that is to vote against this motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** First I have to acknowledge that it is always difficult to follow the member from Renfrew—



Nipissing–Pembroke. He's the best. Let's just face facts in this place. He is the best.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** I love that Peter. He said it just like I asked him to.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** His analysis may be terrible, but he's the best presenter.

I want to speak today about this whole matter of privatizing our electricity system. As you're well aware, Speaker, under the former Progressive Conservative government, there was a move to privatize our electricity system and set up an open, competitive market in electricity. That move, over a decade ago, simply put, crashed disastrously shortly after launch. It was like a Virgin Galactic rocket; it just blew up. The Conservatives had to jump in, put a cap on prices—because they were going through the roof—and abandon, effectively, this competitive market.

But the idea of privatizing the assets didn't die. Tories had already put in motion a leasing of the Bruce nuclear facility to a private company. They made sure that a facility that was publicly owned would start to produce private profit and, coincidentally, electricity as well.

The idea of privatizing was not abandoned by the Liberals. In fact, the Liberals were much more sophisticated than the Conservatives. Some say the Conservatives in these matters were crude, some would say direct, but certainly, the Liberals saw that taking on the privatization issue directly was politically costly. So what they did was, on a piecemeal basis, as coal plants were being shut down, they made sure that new generating facilities were built, owned and operated by private companies. So plant by plant, the system was privatized. It's a very clever strategy. They could always say, "We still own Ontario Power Generation; we still own Hydro One," but in fact, year after year, more and more power generation was moved into private hands. In fact, Ontario Power Generation was prohibited from putting up these new power plants. They were supposed to be private.

What was the impact of this ongoing privatization of electricity? Well, Speaker, you just have to talk to your constituents. I think anyone in this chamber can go out and talk to their constituents—talk to them about their hydro bill, talk to them about how their bill has gone up 325% since 2002, how we're looking at a 40% increase in power over the next five years. In the next five years, that peak-power line on your bill will be hitting 20 cents a kilowatt hours—20 cents. My colleague John Vanthof can talk about the concern and the commitment in rural Ontario to get away from Ontario's electricity system. There's a price that you need in order to generate interest in conservation and sustainability. We're way beyond that. What we've got now is a price that is driving people away from the electricity system.

There is no comprehensive study on what it has cost us to privatize this system. We do not know entirely the scale of profits. I can tell you, Speaker, having worked with legislative research, having looked at the annual reports for a variety of private companies, that the scale of private profit that is flowing out of people's pockets is

somewhere from \$750 million to \$1 billion per year. I can't read all of the reports; some of them are in Japanese. For the ones that were in English that I could get a hold of, I looked at the numbers.

We're in a situation now where in the 1990s, people in this province, companies in this province, investors interested in this province, looking at the cost of electricity didn't have to worry about paying that extra lump of cash, because the math is very simple. When you have a publicly owned company, you don't have to pay extra money in profit to investors. All of the money that's generated stays with the public. That is why we developed an industrial economy in Ontario in the 20th century. We had a competitive advantage. We had power at cost. It made a huge difference to this province's ability to develop industry and manufacturing, and that is being dismantled piece by piece by piece by this Liberal government—again, not as crudely as by the Conservatives, some would say not as directly as by the Conservatives, but just as steadily, with just as steadfast a commitment.

We are now in another phase. The ongoing privatization of power generation has been established by the Liberals. They're in a financial box. They want to get a large influx of cash. They want to start selling off the rest of the system. They have a panel that's making recommendations. I have to say to you, Speaker, this panel seems to be approaching it as cleverly as the Liberals did a decade ago. They aren't going to announce, "We're going to sell off OPG or Hydro One," or apparently not. What they want to do is set up the conditions for selling off pieces of Hydro One, setting up the conditions for selling off pieces of local distribution companies like London Hydro or Toronto Hydro or Horizon in Hamilton so that this government—and we will have to see precisely what their plans are; we haven't had it all unveiled yet—can say, "We haven't sold off Hydro One; we just sold off a chunk of their assets. We have all this wonderful cash that's coming into our pockets. We've changed the tax system so that cities that are going to get less money from us can sell off their hydro utilities if they want to do that. Why not?" That's where they're headed.

Speaker, if we've learned anything in the last 14 years, it's that as you privatize the fundamental, critical assets of this society, you undermine our sustainability and you undermine our affordability. You press people to the limit. It's as simple as that. As we introduce more and more private profit-taking, you have more and more money taken out of people's pockets.

Lorsqu'on a la privatisation de l'alimentation de l'électricité, il y aura une augmentation du prix de l'électricité. C'est simple. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I only have about five minutes here, but I wanted to have the opportunity.

It's really interesting to follow the evolution of the NDP in Ontario over the last six months. I know in the

spring they adopted the philosophy that they were indeed Tories in a hurry. That was reflected, I think, very, very well in the election campaign. They had all these Mike Harris-like populist elements that were contained in their platform. It's interesting enough—and God bless them—at least they should put in their appendix to recognize the old Reform Party of Preston Manning when he was in Ottawa. Of course, Mr. Manning was a great advocate of the use of referenda in order to make public policy decisions.

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When you review the evolution of parliamentary democracy—that's why they elect people; they elect people to make decisions. It's interesting enough, if I check my notes here—I always like to reference very distinguished NDP members. In fact, just last Friday, my good friend the member from Toronto–Danforth had this to say at a press conference—indeed, I'll make sure I'm accurate—dealing with a different topic: “We let people make decisions. They have to make a decision.” That's what the member from Toronto–Danforth said last Friday. I acknowledge that the topic was not assets, but the point remains the same. It's always interesting when I see the “Saul on the road to Damascus” conversion: We had one position last Friday, and we have a new position this Tuesday.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Social Credit.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Yes. My friend from St. Catharines talks about Social Credit. I remember Réal Caouette rather well when he was leading that party in Quebec. Again, he was like Preston Manning. He wanted to use referenda to make public policy decisions that were clearly in the domain of the elected person to make. That's exactly why we won't be supporting that.

We were absolutely clear and transparent. If you look at our budget that we introduced in March—my goodness, it was so good we wanted to bring it back again for a second opportunity for people to pass judgment on it. It was very clear that we would take the opportunity, like with assets that are held by the government of Ontario, to make sure that we're maximizing those kinds of assets. I know that when I'm down in Belleville, Ontario, with my good friend the member from Prince Edward–Hastings that's the kind of thing they want us to do: to be prudent financial managers and look at our assets to make sure we're getting value. That is why we're not supporting this motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It's a pleasure to join the debate on the opposition day motion by the third party. As our whip indicated earlier, we won't be supporting this.

I would just like to thank the member from Peterborough: Every time he is in Belleville he is reminded that the people in Belleville want to elect good fiscal managers, and that's why in Belleville and in Prince Edward–Hastings they continue to elect Tories. But it's always good to have the member from Peterborough joining me in Belleville, that's for sure.

My reasons for opposing the motion have little to do with the nature of privatization itself and have more to do with the shallow manner in which this is being presented here this afternoon. First, as has been discussed a couple of different times by our friends from across and also our whip: We are sent here to make the tough decisions. Even the member from the third party apparently made that kind of a comment just last Friday. The public sends us here to make decisions; they put their trust in us to come here and do what's right for the province of Ontario. The public sends us here to weigh the evidence from the various experts that we have access to and come out with decisions that ultimately are going to put the province in a good place. Unfortunately, we haven't seen a whole lot of that over the last 10 years under this Liberal government. We've never seen the size of our debt this big. As a matter of fact, it's been documented many times here: They've doubled the debt in the province of Ontario in the last 10 years.

They don't send us here—speaking of the public—to punt questions back to them to make decisions on. I know the leader of the third party can be fond, sometimes, of playing Hamlet and dragging out some decisions as long as she possibly can to get as much of the public spotlight as she can—and all we have to do is look back to the budgets of 2012 and 2013 to see the act that played out here in the Legislature. It was a different story this year, and I'll give her credit for that.

Occasionally we have to be the people making hard decisions here. That's what real leadership is all about. Referendums, as has been mentioned, are expensive ways to duck decisions that, really, you don't want to make. It's a way of spending tens of millions of dollars that this province currently doesn't have so that a politician can avoid making a decision that the public is already paying him to make. People are paying us to be here to make decisions on their behalf, so why would we send the decisions back to them and pay millions and millions of dollars to have them do that?

Next, the motion is suggesting that the privatization of Ontario Hydro, which occurred more than a decade ago—12, 13 years ago—is to blame for the steep hydro rate increases that we've seen in the province of Ontario mostly, almost entirely, over the last four years. If we had continued down the road where people were paying the true cost of producing electricity, that would have been fine. But this government decided to turn the electricity grid into a social project. There was a report that was released last week demonstrating that 20% of the increase that we've seen in our hydro bills is created by the cost of putting projects on the grid that are only producing 4% of the power. Amazingly, that fact is absent from the motion, which seems to blame the entirety of the hydro rate increases on a policy that occurred well before the public started to see any increases on their bill over the last four years.

At its root, however, is this motion—it's in response to the panel examining the government assets that was led by Ed Clark of TD Bank. It was a panel that had a



predetermined outcome. We knew what they were going to come back with. From the day it was convened, the results could have been guessed. They could have been predicted by anyone who knew where this government wanted to go on this little journey that we find ourselves on here today. It was okay for them to expand alcohol sales into the LCBO Express stores and farmers' markets, but that's as far as they wanted to go. The government was concerned about wasteful practices at OPG but unwilling to actually do anything about it, preferring instead to study the problem.

Part of the reason we end up talking about privatization in the first place here ultimately has nothing to do with the revenue generated by selling the asset. It has more to do with the fact that a significant number of our constituents feel that they're paying money for services they're not receiving, or not receiving in a manner that reflects what they're paying.

We have to ensure that we're getting value out of our public assets. We have to ensure that we're delivering the products of these public assets in the proper way so that we're delivering value for money, we're delivering customer service. I can tell you in my riding—and it's an interesting riding, Prince Edward–Hastings, because we have Prince Edward county in the south, the island; we have Belleville in the middle; and we have North Hastings and Centre Hastings to the north of Belleville.

The city of Belleville itself gets its power from Veridian, which is a private power company. To the south and to the north, in Prince Edward county and Centre and North Hastings, the power comes from Hydro One. I can tell you, in my constituency office in Belleville, we get hundreds of complaints about service from hydro customers. We don't get any from Veridian customers; we get hundreds from Hydro One customers. So there's a real problem in the way that the service is being delivered by Hydro One. We don't get any complaints about Veridian. They seem to be very accessible to their customers.

They get bills for their electricity every month. You can count on getting a bill from Veridian every month. My constituency office is just north of the 401 in Thurlow township, which receives power from Hydro One. We're lucky if we get a hydro bill every eight months there. So there's something wrong with the way that the service is delivered.

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I had the opportunity to speak to the chair, the president of Hydro One, last winter, when the influx of complaints was just massive. It was shortly after that that the Ombudsman decided to step in and investigate customer service complaints from hydro, but it's unbelievable the number of complaints we received from Hydro One customers. Veridian customers seem to be very pleased with the customer service that they're getting—the fact that they're getting their bills in a timely manner and they don't seem out of whack. It's the Hydro One customers that we're getting all the complaints from.

One commentator remarked that Ontario Power Generation—we had this recently. He commented that it looked more like a pension fund trying to run a power company. You might remember reading that comment. And just this past summer we were subjected to revelations of outrageous pension costs at Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One. Ratepayers were being put on the hook for up to 75% of the cost of pensions at these agencies, and we're on the hook to cover all of the shortfalls within this pension program. That's what prompts this comment from this expert in the energy field.

What we should be doing is always asking if there are ways that we can provide the service better, from the electricity grid to the beverage-alcohol sector—which is a real problem in this province as well. What we need to be looking at is how we can improve what's happening at the LCBO, and improving the marketplace for our craft brewers, as well.

The privatization debate is being had for the wrong reasons. It's being had because we've got a government in Ontario that has dug itself into a massive hole, with no realistic plan to get out, and will now grab everything or anything it can to attempt to fill that hole.

So let's look at the LCBO. Is the LCBO actually serving our brewers, our craft brewers, our wineries, our vintners and our distillers who are trying to make products, build businesses here in Ontario and gain access to the most market share that they possibly can, so that they can sell their products and create jobs in the province of Ontario? Is it providing LCBO customers and Ontario taxpayers with the greatest selection of products that it possibly can?

This summer I went looking for one of my favourite craft beers, which is Muskoka's Twice as Mad Tom; it's a very good beer, if you've never had it. I have seven LCBOs and four Beer Stores in Prince Edward–Hastings, and do you think I could find it anywhere? You can't find it in Prince Edward–Hastings.

If you walk into an LCBO here in downtown Toronto, you might find four or five different Prince Edward county wineries, and we now have over 40 wineries in Prince Edward county. We need to make some fundamental changes in the way we're delivering our services in the LCBO, because if we do it properly we will create jobs right here in Ontario.

Let me move ahead, because I want to give some time to my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London, who is waiting to speak as well. One of the other—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** He's down at the Speaker's wine tasting?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Yes.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Okay, because that's going on right now. Those people would love to have access to the marketplace.

*Interjection:* He's right here.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Oh, there he is, right there. Okay. He's in the bullpen, warming up.

One more thing that I wanted to mention about privatization: Our former colleague, who was the former deputy mayor of Toronto, would often talk quite glowingly and proudly about what happened in Toronto when it came to garbage pickup. It was Doug Holyday who would tell me about the privatization of garbage collection in the west end of Toronto, in the Etobicoke area. The goal there was to improve service, but they also saved taxpayers a heck of a lot of money by privatizing garbage pickup and improving the service in the west end of Toronto.

I do have a few more comments that I would like to make. Are you okay with me speaking a little bit longer, my friend?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Okay. All right.

We do have a responsibility as elected members here to ensure that we are providing value, instead of just presenting bills to ratepayers and taxpayers. We can disagree over the solution, but I don't think we could disagree that right now at a lot of our government agencies we have a massive customer service problem. Just during petitions, my colleague from Kitchener-Conestoga, who sits beside me, was talking about the customer service issues that we have at our FRO offices, our Family Responsibility Office, in the province of Ontario, and the manner in which clients, people who are going in there to receive the service, are being treated. We have a real problem in a lot of our public institutions—not all of them, but in many of them—where customer service is the last thing on the list of priorities, and I think we need to change that.

So the debate here, as intellectually shallow as it can be, and that's not because of anything we're saying on this side—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** We should be talking about how we can improve accountability, and that's not what we're doing. We're not talking about how to improve accountability. It's a rather shallow discussion, and it comes from the wording of this motion.

Because this motion in no way speaks to how we intend to improve services that taxpayers receive, Mr. Speaker, I'll be opposing this, along with my colleagues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> Catherine Fife:** Monsieur le Président, ce gouvernement libéral ne comprend pas la valeur de nos biens publics et leur importance pour les gens de l'Ontario. Il est temps que les élus se souviennent de la valeur des services publics, qu'ils servent le bien commun, qu'ils soient imputables et responsables, et qu'ils soient guidés par la vérité.

For those of you whose French is not as good as mine, I will say, as a translation, it is time that our elected leaders remembered public service values, serving the common good, being accountable and responsible, and speaking truth to power. That's what we are doing here

today. We are speaking truth to the power of this Liberal government which has lost its way.

The privatization agenda has not only been accelerated under this government; it has been aggressively so. In response to some of the criticism around privatization, the Liberal government says that it is needed because it's part of innovation.

Privatization has nothing to do with innovation in public service delivery or saving money for citizens, but it has everything to do with making money for a privileged few. It happens when politicians start to lose sight of the public interest and start thinking about their own interests. The distance between elected politicians and wealthy business interests is shrinking to the point where we can hardly see the difference.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of integrity in this debate here today on the part of the Liberal government and of the PC caucus is a slap in the face to the people of this province. We were talking about the public interest when we brought this motion to this floor, and we have the evidence to show and to prove that the recommendations in the early report by the council are not in the best interests of the people of this province.

In question period, it's becoming more and more apparent to us that the government has no real interest in following through on what they put in their own budget, actually. I would draw the attention of the House to page 173 of this Building Opportunity, Securing Our Future budget. On page 173 of the budget, it says, "Over the medium term, the government will continue to take responsible actions to ensure every dollar spent counts, and manage program expense growth to balance the budget" at some point in the future.

By following through on this direction around privatization, the government is wilfully turning away from those very words. In this House, we have asked the Treasury Board president, the Premier and the finance minister specific questions around privatizing public services. There are so many examples, actually, to draw upon, but I'll draw upon IT. Over the last five years, this government has accelerated the contracting out of IT services, which is not in the interests of the people of this province, which actually ends up costing the people more money. Quite honestly, it's quite disturbing, actually, to the point that—

*Interjection.*

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**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Perhaps the member from Timmins would like to join the debate.

Quite honestly, two to three times the cost of actually offering those services in the public sector—and at the moment, Ed Clark has specifically recommended privatizing Hydro One's distribution network and the privatization of local hydro utilities. However, if you read the report from the council—and the language is very interesting in this report—Mr. Clark did not offer any reason as to why operating Hydro One transmission separately from distribution would be more efficient. There is no rationale contained in this report thus far. It



does not explain how it would be more efficient; it does not explain how it would reduce costs. It does not improve service or reliability for ratepayers or return more revenue for the public. So there is no good reason to do this except that it's part of the privatization agenda of this government.

When we delve down a little bit further—as I said, the language is really interesting as well, because in the report he goes on to say that we would then dilute the government's interest in that resulting distribution business by bringing in private capital. What he's really saying is that he's going to dilute the interest of the government. What he really means is that he's going to dilute the interest of the people of this province, because those assets have already been invested by the people of this province.

Quite honestly, it would appear that the Liberals just don't get it. The member from Cambridge—it was really surprising, because she is still referring to this budget as a progressive budget.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, it is.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** There is nothing progressive about cutting every ministry by 6%. I would like to remind the member, respectfully, that those cuts that were made by Mike Harris were 5% cuts. In this budget, you're proposing a 6% cut, except for four ministries. It is really interesting. It's also very interesting that after the election, the media came out and called this an austerity budget, and it is. It is an austerity budget, pure and simple.

Our job, as the third party—the official opposition is a little bit busy right now with their leadership race, but we have to make sure that the waste that you've already continued on, the pattern of wasting dollars in the province of Ontario by serving your own personal needs, stops here. The suggestion of this motion of a referendum might actually instill some more trust. It might actually instill some trust in this House, because the people do not trust this government. They do not trust the business practices. They do not trust this budget. And when they see that 6% reduction year after year after year, I think that they're going to be very surprised.

It's our job to protect them, but it's also our job to follow the money. When the President of the Treasury Board stands up and says, "No, we're not privatizing"—the public accounts that have been filed since 2009 to 2014 prove that there is an aggressive and accelerated privatization agenda in this province. Selling off the distribution rights is privatization. If you don't understand that, then there are bigger problems that you have, because that is actually what is happening: 6% cuts in every ministry except four, an accelerated and aggressive privatization agenda which wastes money in IT and lab testing. We have already found \$430 million in savings for you. You say that you need revenue. We've found it, but you have to stop privatizing public services and selling off the assets of this province. It's very simple.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** You know, Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats can be so endearing. The member from Kitchener–Waterloo decides to suggest that the other two parties, the Conservatives and ourselves, somehow lack intellectual integrity. I thought that was a little offensive. But I remember in May, when I got up, about a week after the leader of her party decided they weren't going to support the budget, I turned on my radio. What did I hear? I heard the leader of the third party say to Matt Galloway: "We know that the government we had was on a track to privatize the TTC. We don't think that's the right thing to do."

Matt Galloway replies by saying, "Hold on, where did you hear anything about privatizing the TTC?"

The leader the third party said, "That's ... Kathleen Wynne's plan."

Matt Galloway goes on to say, "I don't think I've ever heard anything from Kathleen Wynne about privatizing the TTC though."

The leader of the third party then responds, saying, "You do need to look at what their plan is."

Matt Galloway responds, "We have."

For some reason, in her desperate need to run against herself for leader of her own party, the NDP seems to lack the very intellectual integrity they accuse everyone else of not having. It's fascinating that we are on some agenda to privatize.

Let me just quote the chair of a process that's still going on, that if the third party wanted to influence, they certainly could if they weren't afraid to take a position on anything. Mr. Clark, along with Ms. Ecker and Ms. Lankin, says, "We recommend keeping all three companies—OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO." He said that just a couple of days ago.

But you know, as it was said in Hamlet, since it has been quoted, I think thou dost protest too much. Let's look at the record of privatization of the third party. It's fascinating and insightful.

The NDP member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is writing, asking us to renew a private power agreement. We don't have to go back to Adam Beck and attack the Tories a hundred years ago; we only have to go back a few weeks, and they're already demanding we renew privatizing policies. The NDP signed nine private power agreements—not two, not five, not six, but nine. I guess NDP privatization is somehow morally superior to any other kind of privatization.

But do you know what I really love? When I was in Manitoba, I fought a lot of NDP privatization. I would say: "What's the record of other NDP governments?"—because you would look for some intellectual consistency. "How is Manitoba getting back to balance?" The member from Kenora–Rainy River could spit across. Let's just look—I'm sure Ms. Horwath talks to Premier Selinger on a regular basis.

In 2011, from the Brandon Sun—let me read their editorial: The NDP government "partially privatized the provision of emergency medical transportation throughout the province when it entered into an untendered 10-

year, \$160-million contract with STARS, an Alberta company.” The reality for the NDP: When they’re in power and they have to get back to balance, they’ll privatize emergency medical services. Can you imagine the uproar in this House if we Liberals dared to privatize medical services?

What else is the Manitoba NDP doing to get back to balance? “Last summer, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers issued a public warning that the province was preparing Manitoba Hydro for privatization by outsourcing work to private contractors, cutting jobs and raising electricity rates”—those nasty New Democrats in Manitoba.

“This past February” the government of Manitoba, an NDP majority government “sold the province’s property registry to” an Ontario-based company. Let me just read the kicker—this is my favourite line in the Brandon Sun editorial. Let me read it slowly so we can all absorb this little gem: “The NDP claims to oppose the privatization of crown corporations, but the Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act”—of that province—“contains a provision that specifically contemplates”—now wait for it, Mr. Speaker—“the privatization of Manitoba Hydro, the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, the Liquor Control Commission (and) the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation.” That is in the legislation.

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The integrity question need not be posed to the Conservatives. They are consistent with their principles. The integrity question need not be posed to us; we are totally consistent in our principles. The integrity question needs to be posed to the third party, who lack backbone even when they’re a third party in the comfort of no pressure to actually have to be part of any serious resolution of the recession of 2008—sitting comfortably, not having to make a tough decision, hiding in the weeds, telling their constituents whatever they want about how they vote down here, because they get not a lot of airtime—and can’t even make a tough decision. When we had the most progressive budget in the history of this province, with almost no tough decisions at all, they couldn’t support it. They forced an election.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** My friend from Kitchener-Waterloo maybe has trust issues.

Let me tell you about public trust in Toronto Centre, Mr. Speaker. Cathy Crowe, the two-time NDP candidate, a stalwart of the NDP, wrote a letter to the leader of her own party, the member from Hamilton, saying, “Where the heck are you guys going? You’re starting to sound more like the Conservatives. You’re even starting to sound like the Manitoba NDP. You want to privatize everything.” They had NDP candidates out knocking on doors for Liberals, so if you want to talk to me about integrity, you explain to me—when you get a Liberal candidate out knocking on doors for you in Kitchener-Waterloo, you give me a call.

This is what this is really about. It’s not about the Liberals; it’s not about the Conservatives; it’s about the

third party, which has lost its way. Why is there only one NDP government left in this country, and it’s in the middle of a crisis? Because they forgot who they are, and because there is no privatization agenda, because we are protecting public services and because we are not so ideologically hidebound. We actually listen to people and can achieve a consensus that gets politics moving forward in this country.

The hidebound third party, which is increasingly becoming a rump held hostage not even by its ideological base but by so many special interests that it can’t present a coherent position on anything—but they really do. When they’re in a tough spot and they’re in third place, they want to move a motion to have a referendum. We’re in first place, and we’re not so weak in the knees and detached from our values and our principles that we have to run to the washroom or the public polling booths every time a tough decision is being made.

It’s going to be very interesting when all of those New Democrats from Toronto who didn’t vote for you last time show up for your leadership review and they ask you, “What kinds of tough decisions are you making in the House? Where is your principled position?” I’d love to be a fly on the wall of those national NDP meetings, when the Manitoba New Democrats, BC New Democrats and our former friends from Nova Scotia, who made similar decisions—the Nova Scotia NDP did way more privatization than we have ever contemplated.

If you have integrity, my dear friend from Kitchener-Waterloo, hold yourself to the same standard. Hold yourself and your party to the same standard, because there is a word for it when you hold everyone else to some moral standard that you yourself cannot achieve. It’s called hypocrisy and sanctimony, Mr. Speaker. It’s called sanctimony, and when people get turned off by the third party, it’s because you—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would ask the member to withdraw.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Are you done?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No, not quite.

Do you know what it is? Governing is tough stuff. It is, and not every decision you make can be so ideologically pure that you are locked into the concrete of ideology. We are protecting public services. I don’t always agree with my friends in the Tories, but they generally are consistent. I don’t agree with my friend from Prince Edward-Hastings; my experience with public servants is awesome.

I have a great community health centre on Sherbourne. The public service staff there run an amazing health centre. They help some of the most vulnerable people and new Canadians. They run that health centre better than anyone runs a business. Maybe the people in Enron could take a few lessons from people in the Ontario public service.

My LCBO is kick-butt. The staff there takes pride in knowing Ontario wines and various vintages. They can tell you the story of biodynamic wine. I think we live in a



province with amazing hospitals and public services, and I make no apology. I am proud.

It is not a fire sale. This is \$3.15 billion going into important public services; this isn't a privatization scheme. If you want to understand what that means—because they don't in the third party, Mr. Speaker—look at regional express rail. The Minister of Transportation right now is going to be electrifying the entire system, putting us on six-car trains, reducing the operating costs and probably doubling the ridership, building the revenue base not by raising fares, but by improving service and improving ridership, which builds our tax base.

This is innovation. This is entrepreneurial liberalism in a public service. That's why we've replaced you as the trusted progressive party in Ontario, because we know what we stand for. We know what our values are, and while we stick to our principles, we are never so intellectually hidebound.

If you want to throw stones, don't live in glass houses, because the only leadership in crisis right now is yours, and the only party with an integrity problem, my friends, is yours.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** After listening to that, I almost want to give my time back to Mr. Yakabuski to rebut that spirited debate.

However, I want to thank everyone who came forward and spoke today, including those running for the leadership of the third party on the upcoming weekend coming forward.

It's making reference to a previous Conservative government in this motion that does quite stir within me. I thought that maybe we'd bring some context for why Premier Harris had to do what he had to do through his tenure as Premier. We all know that Mr. Harris inherited the mess of an NDP government that ran in Ontario the one and only time, thank goodness. I thought I'd go over some of the statistics that occurred during the time frame during the NDP reign of Ontario.

In 1990, once they were elected, their spending exploded to \$45.5 billion, which was an increase of 13%. Mind you, they were only government for six months of that year. The NDP's first budget the next year increased program spending by another 13%, which was another \$51.4 billion. They increased taxes and incurred a deficit of \$10.7 billion, which the next year they upped to \$12.1 billion, which was 4.2% of the GDP.

Over its five years, the NDP racked up \$49.7 billion of new debt, despite heavily increasing the tax burden upon the people of Ontario. As a result, they almost eclipsed the \$100-billion mark in debt, to which this Liberal government has added \$200 billion more to make it \$300 billion.

Interest costs, we should point out, were \$5.5 billion in 1990-91. By the time they left office, interest payments alone were \$9.6 billion—an increase of almost 75%.

You can imagine, with interest charges of \$9.6 billion at that time in the 1990s, what percentage of the total

budget that cost. Before you could deliver a nurse, before you could deliver a teacher at the school, you paid \$9.6 billion to the bank because of their spending problem. The interest costs on the debt as a percentage of revenues increased from 11% in 1990-91 to 17.5% when they left office.

Let us not forget the effects they had on the public service while they were in power. They love to come back and attack Mike Harris—who, by the way, has been out of office for close to 15 years—but they were the ones who instigated opening up collective bargaining agreements with the social contract. I've got to say I've talked to quite a few policemen in my riding, and they're still burned about that, the fact that the government would implement not only a wage freeze, but also unpaid days off in order to balance the budget. That was their response to being an open and fair government in this province: to actually not only to go and open up the collective agreements, but to take away the money that these people earned and were owed and actually say, "Stay at home, but we're not going to pay you." It's unbelievable that that came from an NDP government in this province, but that's how it occurs.

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They put a cap on enrolment in medical schools. Today, in my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, we are still feeling the brunt of the caps on medical schools. We have a doctor shortage. We have a doctor shortage because the NDP government, in the 1990s, capped medical school enrolment, which capped the number of graduates that are available, that should be working today in rural Ontario; instead, we have a gap in our system. Unfortunately, their decisions in the 1990s, because they don't know how to budget properly and they don't know how to run a government, are now causing effects 20 years later in the fact that rural communities throughout the province—northern Ontario and rural southern Ontario—have a lack of doctors because of their mismanagement of policies while they were in government.

What is also never spoken about is that tuition fees more than doubled during the reign of the NDP in the government of Ontario. It's unbelievable, the fact that they speak such a great game. Their leadership contenders all come out talking about their integrity and how strong they are. However, for what they condemned the Tories for, they did worse; they did double. They increased the debt total from \$35.4 billion—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The member from Windsor-Tecumseh, come to order.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I've got to make mention of the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane. I picked out the member from Don Valley West early, before she became Premier. I think the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane would make a great leader of the NDP, and I think he should go forth next weekend and promote himself for it. I thought he was great.

We also talked about the little bit they've brought forward about energy rates in this province, and before I

continue on, maybe I do need to talk a bit about Hydro One. Hydro One, in the last few years, has become a mess. In fact, it's causing so many problems for the people of Ontario that the Ombudsman is now involved in doing an investigation. Our offices have been given an extra MPP liaison to deal with the issues at Hydro One. There are so many people not receiving bills out in rural Ontario and quite a bit of over-billing. Consumers are being gouged with estimates, consumption increases that aren't accurate. Consumers are facing the reality of billing errors resulting in multiple billings, and then they're being cancelled, added on and cancelled, and simply not getting the bill.

I have constituents in my riding who are dealing with Hydro One who were told a year ago that they had a \$4,000 credit at Hydro One. They talked to the person on the phone, and they said, "Stop with your monthly payment system. You've got a credit; use it up." So they said fine. They'd call up every month asking, "How's my credit?" and they saw their credit going down. Well, lo and behold, this past September, they got a phone call from Hydro One going, "Oops, we goofed. There was never a credit there to start with. You owe us \$3,600. Pay up." Can you believe that? We're debating whether or not Mike Harris made a decision 15 years ago when we should be debating how we can fix Hydro One. Instead, they're wasting their opposition day on theatrics with regard to their upcoming leadership convention. What we do have to deal with, though, is the fact that these people who thought that they didn't have any bills to pay all of a sudden are whacked with a \$3,600 bill.

I also have other constituents in my riding who didn't receive a bill for months upon months, and when they did receive the bill, it was for \$260,000, obviously a billing error, but imagine the shock when you open up that bill and you see the fact that Hydro One has messed up again.

Mr. Speaker, just with that fact alone, the discussion we should have been having today in regard to energy and the fact that Hydro One is broken and it's not getting any better, perhaps including all three parties in a debate to improve it might have been a step forward. Instead, we want to talk about previous governments, which I have no problem talking about with the NDP, because somehow the NDP feel like they don't need to speak about their past behaviour or where they came from. However, it's great to continually speak about what the government has done or what the official opposition has done in previous years. It's ridiculous.

The other problem with regard to energy—maybe we should have had a discussion about the Green Energy Act, what has occurred with that; smart meters alone that have come forth and don't work. Smart meters that need to be replaced and then still don't work continue to be a problem.

The debt retirement charge—where has that money gone? Why isn't the debt retirement charge paid off yet? However, unfortunately, we don't know. The people at home definitely have to pay that bill every month, and they're getting kind of upset about it. The delivery

charge: In some instances, the delivery charge is more than the energy cost. Where is the explanation and breakdown of what's going on with the delivery charge? And how can we work together as legislators to improve the system in order to give some stability to their product?

This NDP motion is talking about bringing forth a referendum on any major decision this government needs to make; unfortunately, we call those elections, Mr. Speaker. The government is elected to run the province on their agenda, and the opposition's job is, of course, to critique and tell the government different options on where to take policy. That's where we would stand, going forward.

To take every single issue that comes forward and have to take it to the population to decide yes or no—number one is the cost to the taxpayer, because they have to fund those referendums; number two, the third party involvement, which, again, would increase costs; number three, the other thing: Turnout at the polls is quite dismal in this province. I think it's best, probably, to use what we have elected—we have 107 members representing the entire province—to actually get a feel, to have a debate between each other as opposed to having a referendum where only 30%, 35% of the population turns out. I think you have a better representation of the people of the province of Ontario where we can sit and debate at the Legislature going forward.

The idea of putting assets for sale to a referendum—I don't think that is the right way to go. I think at the end of the day you're going to see that as a wasted proposal. I wish the third party today would have talked more about Hydro One, for instance, or the Green Energy Act, but instead, as I mentioned earlier, they decided to continue on their mixed message they're sending to the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time to speak today, and again, I appreciate everyone who has spoken.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm very worried when I see the veering to the right by the New Democratic Party, which used to be a good left-wing party at one time, now embracing what the Social Credit in Alberta used to embrace and what the Reform Party out west used to embrace; that is, the referendum. Somebody else tried to do that as well. The Mike Harris government of years gone by wanted a referendum if you were going to increase taxes at all. They were part of that, and I think the NDP at that time was very much opposed to it.

I'm concerned when I see a party which, over the years, has ensured that we don't venture into that right-wing kind of politics, now embracing that politics. I'm not entirely surprised because, during the campaign, the queen of austerity was without a doubt the leader of the New Democratic Party, who kept talking about how she was going to save all this money for the taxpayers of this province and was going to cut this and cut that—we recognize that.

*Interjection.*



**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who spoke en français—which leadership candidates usually do to widen their popularity—interjects. I didn't catch what she said, but I'm not supposed to respond to that.

I recall as well—we talk about principle in saving money. The New Democratic Party in power—and particularly my friends from the union movement would know that, with one stroke of the pen, and no hearings, by the way, that I can ever recall in committee—simply tore up every contract in the province of Ontario in the public sector. There are people today who have remembered that. I voted against it, of course. I voted against that on that occasion. I was with the brothers and sisters, but the party in power at the time, the New Democratic Party, did it. Did they do it to be mean? No. Did they do it to be right-wing? No. They were faced with a certain reality that the government of Manitoba, as my friend the Minister of the Environment has explained, faces today, so they're looking at a number of options.

I heard somebody else saying that they were going to give marching orders to Frances Lankin and Janet Ecker. I know those two individuals: both powerful cabinet ministers in different parties. Nobody is giving any marching orders to Frances Lankin or to Janet Ecker, I can assure you of that, and they come from other political parties.

1740

I looked at, when the NDP was in power, what they privatized. Most of the members here won't remember this, but the NDP government of the day sold GO Transit rolling stock, the rail cars. The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane was part of that government. They sold the cars and then they leased them back from the private sector. That's called privatization. They started out, by the way, on the road to the 407 with something that happened there for the NDP.

They also had private health clinics that they allowed. I was surprised when I saw that happen.

They did not discontinue private car insurance. I remember that auto insurance, public auto, was part of the NDP platform, and I admired them for it because I recognized that they were standing up for a principle. They've abandoned that as well.

Now my friend the member for Timiskaming has asked that a contract be renewed for a private sector hydro project. I understand that very much. I appreciate the fact that he has encountered this circumstance and has decided that he's going to be in favour of that.

So I worry when I see—I know what happened. During the campaign, the NDP was the Tories in power—sorry, the Tories in a hurry. They were swinging to the right. They were highly populist. I couldn't get an environment question out of them if I tried, because they had abandoned that. They were busy with populist causes, not the true causes that the New Democratic Party has stood for in years gone by. I was disappointed because I wanted to see that Ginger Group within the New Democratic Party raising those particular issues.

Now, with the prospect of a leadership review coming up on the weekend, they are veering, or at least the leader is veering, drastically to the left. We don't know, by the end of the year, if she survives that—and I wish her well, because I always wish political leaders well. If she survives that particular—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would remind the speaker that you're not talking to—

**Interjection:** You're the Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** You're absolutely right; I am. Thank you for that.

I would remind the member of the motion at hand—that you would continue to speak to the motion at hand and not debate any leadership. Thank you very much.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** In fact, I'm going to relinquish the floor to one of my colleagues who I know will want to elaborate on this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It does give me great pleasure to stand and talk to this motion. As a new member to this House, I think it's important that I try to keep an open mind to all the motions and all the opportunities that come in, and on this particular motion from the leader of the third party, I have kept an open mind.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** No, I'm a little bit on the fence on this one. I'm not quite sure if I'll vote with my party, vote with this government. I've been thinking about it, and, you know, I wanted to hear the arguments.

Having heard the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I've got to tell you, I was moved. I was moved to really reconsider this notion—no longer on the fence. You put such convincing arguments down to us about why it is that a referendum in such a circumstance would be somewhat irresponsible. I take you up on that. I think it was a very convincing moment for me.

Then the member from Prince Edward–Hastings: To hear you acknowledge the importance of us being down here to make decisions, to not have to go out on every decision for a referendum, that we listen to our constituents, we receive information, they send us letters, we bring their concerns to this august House—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, with this kind of acknowledgement, how precious it seems to me that—this need to go and do a referendum or do committee hearings all across the province on every single bill that we bring forward, how seriously misleading that is when we know that we're here to make decisions, we can make decisions, and we will make decisions.

I'm particularly concerned about what I would call a somewhat irresponsible direction in this motion. There are two issues here, both the referendum—and I think we've pretty much put that aside. One does not do a referendum under any circumstances where you have an

absolutely clear mandate from the people that you don't need a referendum. We have an absolutely clear mandate.

Less than six months ago, I was in the midst of a campaign with the previous member—we were in a debate and he was asked, “Why didn't you support this progressive budget?” He said, “It's hidden in the back of your appendices. You're going to sell off the LCBO, and I can't see that happening.” I said, “The back of the appendix? It's right there in the foreward.” I said, “It says right here”—and I opened up the book and I went to the tabbed section—“It says that the government will look at maximizing and unlocking values.” It's right in the foreward. There was no secret agenda. Everybody knew that we were going to look at these assets, and having looked at these assets—and Mr. Clark has done a wonderful job in the preliminary report that the Premier spoke so eloquently about this morning again. He came out very clearly. He thinks those core three assets should stay in public hands, but that doesn't mean there are not opportunities for maximizing the revenue streams that come out of it. We're looking to maximize those streams.

We also had the issue, at the time during the campaign, of the General Motors shares that we held when this government put money into the auto sector to ensure that it wouldn't lose those jobs in the auto sector. When the members opposite objected strenuously to this direction, and we took shares back in keeping plants alive—plants in Oshawa, plants in Windsor, plants in Kitchener. We took asset shares, and for us to continue to hold those asset shares would be totally irresponsible. The job was done, the plants were back, the jobs were saved, and now I believe we've sold off those assets and recovered the value into the Trillium Trust so we can build much-needed transportation and transit infrastructure in the GTA and the rest of Ontario.

The same thing with the LCBO, let's be very clear: The LCBO, according to Mr. Clark, should stay in public hands. But that doesn't mean that the LCBO doesn't have assets that should be sold. Recently, the head office for the LCBO—a great piece of real estate in the downtown part of Toronto at the foot of Yonge Street at Lakeshore—has been put out on an RFP. We're going to maximize the value in that asset, estimated somewhere in the order of a quarter of a billion dollars. We're going to put that money back in the Trillium Trust so we can use that to build subways. That's so important—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** And bridges.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** And bridges, of course—bridges and roads out into Quinte West.

I remember, as a student of Canadian history, when William Lyon Mackenzie King during the war effort was concerned that we did not have sufficient capacity to build rubber tires in Canada to meet the war effort. I think it's appropriate that we should be remembering that it wasn't just soldiers fighting, it was a whole infrastructure behind the efforts that we put into the conflict. So Mackenzie King went and he nationalized the rubber industry so that we could create enough tires to go on the jeeps, the planes and all the military vehicles in order to

meet our war commitments and so we could have a positive influence in Europe. When the war was over, they didn't sit on those assets; they sold the assets off—national rubber—so that the company could continue. In emerging circumstances, government steps in, provides infrastructure as required, but then where the private sector is better placed, they step away.

It concerns me when I hear the member from Toronto–Danforth, who happens to be my member, doing this whole-scale attack on private enterprise. There's absolutely nothing wrong with making a profit. I have a sense that, if he had his way, all industries would be in public hands and there would be no private enterprise. But I believe very strongly in the private enterprise system.

The member came to my door during the election, or actually pre-election as he was campaigning, and I used to refer to him as the member who always says no—no to this, no to that. There are always signs in my neighbourhood: “Stop this.” “Stop that.” And I said to the member for Toronto–Danforth, “You've got to be in favour of something.” He turns to a sign on my lawn that says, “I support wind power.” And he says, “I support that.” I think it's fantastic that the member for Toronto–Danforth supports wind power, but that's wind power under the current framework in which we are creating renewable energy in this province; that's wind power which, by his own admission in his statement today, is in private sector hands. So I ask him: Does he really support wind power, or only wind power that's provided by public agencies? Because the wind power we're getting now that he purports to support is being built by private enterprise, and I think that's a great thing.

So we don't—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** How many windmills in Beaches–East York?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I can see one, and there almost was a second.

Let's also understand the cost of referendums. We just had an election—an unnecessary election, by some people's—mind you, I think it was necessary or I wouldn't have the pleasure of speaking to this motion. But a \$90-million expense to hold an election which many people, when we were going door to door during the election, said, “Why did they do this? Why did they put this province at risk, and an unnecessary expenditure, when you had such a progressive budget?”

I'm glad they did it, because I have this chance to be here today, but to even contemplate going back out and spending that money when it's absolutely unnecessary, when we have a mandate, would be irresponsible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the member. Well, that was certainly interesting—highly spirited.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”



All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”  
I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time.

#### Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul
Bisson, Gilles	Gates, Wayne	Natyshak, Taras
Campbell, Sarah	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Cimino, Joe	Gretzky, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Hatfield, Percy	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Horwath, Andrea	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** All those opposed to the motion, please rise.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Anderson, Granville	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bailey, Robert	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Baker, Yvan	Hudak, Tim	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Thompson, Lisa M.
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Dickson, Joe	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	McMeekin, Ted	Yurek, Jeff
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 21; the nays are 71.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negated.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** We do have a late show tonight.

Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### CHILD CARE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The member for Simcoe North has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given on October 30, 2014, by the Minister of Education. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and

the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to be here. I requested the late show—really, the late show is when you don't get an answer to a question. That's what I responded in my application.

Quite frankly, I asked the minister to give me the actual numbers from the Ministry of Education on how many independent daycare spaces would be lost when we have over 800,000 children in the hands of independent child care providers in Ontario. Our calculations are a very conservative 140,000. The minister has disputed that from day one and said, “No, that's not true at all.” I simply ask her what the number would be. Tell us what your numbers are because, clearly, we're going to lose tens of thousands of daycare spaces at least.

The second part of the question was even worse. I asked, first of all, if the bill would travel and if in fact we did a rally in front of her office—which is planned for this weekend, by the way, Mr. Speaker—whether she would attend the rally. I got a non-answer to both of those questions. I thought they were fair questions.

As I've said before during this consultation, the government, over and over again, has said, “We've consulted with the public,” and nothing could be further from the truth. When you don't consult with the people who provide the services to a little over 800,000 children in Ontario and then you turn around and say that, with the so-called support of the Ombudsman, you're doing your job and that you've actually consulted, something's wrong with that.

I've just been bitter with this government over the way they've handled this bill—time-allocating it after only six hours of debate. All of our members wanted to speak to this; many still have to speak as well. I have over 400 letters in my office right now from independent child care providers who are asking us to fight this all the way. They wanted to have committee hearings. We even had the support today of the New Democratic Party, the third party, on how they would like to see more travel time as well.

This isn't rocket science. We're delaying this bill by seven weeks. There's been a disaster made by that government, on behalf of the child care providers of Ontario, on behalf of all daycare in Ontario, for about the last 10 years and now they're coming out and it absolutely has to be rushed. Why does it have to be rushed so soon? The reason is, people are getting to the members. They're getting to the minister. They're phoning her. They're phoning their offices or sending them emails. They want this bill passed and to go away, and then they'll deal with the consequences after.

1810

I don't agree with that. I think if there was ever a bill that should have been travelled in this province, that should be travelled to all parts of the province, it's this bill. We have babies, infants and families from one end of this province to the next. It is truly a bill that needs

attention from all people in the province. The best we can do is that maybe people in Thunder Bay or Timmins or Sudbury or North Bay or Ottawa might get a chance to do a conference call. That's completely unfair. We've travelled so many bills in the past that have not had nearly the significance of this bill, and that travel has actually taken place.

So I'm very disappointed in the government that they would do this to the independent child care providers of the province. Judging by the letters that were read yesterday by members of the New Democratic Party and other members of our caucus, I think we're united in that. I'm sure the members in the government caucus are getting those letters as well; I know the minister's office is; I know for sure the Premier's office is. I think that we should be travelling this bill, and I absolutely detest the fact that we would time-allocate something like this and try to get it swept under the carpet as early as maybe the early part of December.

The question was not answered by the minister. It is called question period. I know that we never get an answer, but the reality is, I thought it was a good question that I asked, both the question and the supplementary. I can understand spinning it a little bit, this sort of thing, but she never made any kind of attempt whatsoever to answer that question. What she came back with was, she said, "I'd like to know how you calculate your numbers." All she said was, "We've added 130,000." We know those numbers. We have all the data from the Ministry of Education. I have as much information about this bill as the minister has. For that reason, I think I have the right to call this late show, and I still expect a decent answer from the parliamentary assistant.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The parliamentary assistant has up to five minutes to respond.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Speaker, on October 30, the honourable member from Simcoe North made a claim which I believe is unsubstantiated in this House about Bill 10 and unlicensed child care spaces. While I can't speak to those numbers, I can speak to what I know, and what I know is grounded in facts.

It's a fact that since 2003 our government has added more than 130,000 licensed spaces to the child care sector. The member opposite obviously just made reference to that as well. Since the introduction of full-day kindergarten, licensed child care has grown by 20%. That's almost 8% in the last year alone. Since 2003-04, the government has doubled child care funding to more than \$1 billion per year.

Speaker, the honourable member from Simcoe North said that unlicensed child care providers care for 78% of Ontario's children. Statistics Canada recently reported that 43% of Ontario families seek some form of child care, and we know that in 2013 and 2014, 23.5% of Ontario's children are in licensed care. Therefore, we can assume that it is approximately 20%, not 78% of children, that are cared for by unlicensed child care providers. The honourable member did not account for other

important forms of child care, such as parents, relatives, nannies etc.

Additionally, if the proposed Child Care Modernization Act passes, the number of children that licensed home child care providers could care for would increase from five to six. That means that if a current licensed home child care provider took on one additional space, approximately 6,000 new child care spaces would be created. Unlicensed child care providers would be permitted to care for a maximum of five children, and they would have to follow the same rules as licensed providers for relevant age groupings.

Research identifies education and training, provider-child ratios, children's ages and provider supports as key contributors to the provision of quality child care in the province. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association and the National Resource Centre for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education recommends no more than a maximum of two children under the age of two. In the event of an unforeseen emergency, such as fire, restricting to no more than two children under the age of two and including a provider's own children in the maximum number of children protects our youngest and most vulnerable who are being cared for by one individual. In addition, research suggests that these ratios support healthy relationships and the brain development of young children.

Speaker, this proposed legislation is built on steps we've already taken to improve oversight of the unlicensed child care sector and protect Ontario's children.

In August, we launched a searchable registry of verified complaints about unlicensed child care providers. It provides people with confirmed information about unlicensed providers who have violated the Day Nurseries Act. This searchable registry has also been paired with a toll-free telephone number. This telephone number allows people to report alleged complaints regarding unlicensed providers and inquire about verified complaints against unlicensed providers. We've also established a dedicated enforcement unit to follow up on complaints and information relating to unlicensed child care providers.

These are all ways we're improving oversight of the child care sector and early years system. We want to keep Ontario's children safe and hold our violators accountable.

If passed, Bill 10 would enable us to go even further. It's truly a transformative bill and will put Ontario on the leading edge of groundbreaking change. The driving force behind the proposed bill is ensuring that families have access to safe, modern child care that will give children the best possible start in life.

But our child care services are currently governed by a patchwork of rules and regulations, and this has to change. It needs to change. That's why, if passed, Bill 10 will replace the outdated legislation that currently governs child care in the province. The Day Nurseries Act hasn't fundamentally changed since the 1980s. Since that time, we know that our world has certainly changed.



Bill 10, if passed, would also amend the Education Act, the Early Childhood Educators Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

This proposed legislation also reflects valuable input from our stakeholders. In 2012, we received over 400 submissions during our consultation period from municipalities, licensed and unlicensed child care providers, First Nations, child care advocates, other child care and early years partners and, of course, parents. We listened to them, and we continue to value their input.

I look forward to the support of all members in this House of this very important piece of legislation, and I look forward to continuing the great work that we've already done to modernize child care in the early years services in Ontario.

Speaker, the honourable member from Simcoe North asked if Minister Sandals would attend a gathering in Guelph, Ontario, organized by some independent child care providers. I'd be pleased to inform him that she's always interested in meeting with constituents and stakeholders and any member from the education sector. I would suggest that the individuals get in contact with her office and take it from there.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for the response on behalf of the Minister of Education.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1818.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
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<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwalá, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones



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Grant Crack, Han Dong  
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson  
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Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren  
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
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Todd Smith  
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Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon  
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett  
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon  
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh  
Soo Wong  
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Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield  
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi  
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry  
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Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter  
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry  
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas  
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon  
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas  
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim











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